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Margaret Oliphant: Gender, Identity, and Value in the Victorian Periodical Press

by

Rhonda-Lea Carson-Batchelor

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Department of English

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Abstract

The Victorian period saw the rise of many women to professional eminence in literary fields. Margaret Oliphant (1828-1897), novelist, biographer, literary critic, social commentator, and historian, was just one who participated in the cultural debate about the changing place, role, and value of women within society and the workplace--'the woman question'--but her conservative and careful feminism has attracted little critical attention (or esteem) to her fiction.

Her nonfiction submissions to periodical literature have been examined even less often than her fiction contributions. Critical biographers like Vineta and Robert Colby and Merryn Williams account for this neglect by citing (to uphold) her posthumous and enduring relegation to the category of 'hack' writer. Because she wrote 'on demand' for the most mainstream (and prestigious) journals of the day--*Blackwood's Magazine* (her primary employer), *Macmillan's Magazine*, *Cornhill Magazine*, *Contemporary Review*, *Edinburgh Review*--her work is perceived to be complicit in the literary industry's patriarchal marginalisation of women as individuals and as cultural producers.

This dissertation argues against these perceptions by examining Oliphant's strategies of self-representation in a selection of her nonfiction: *The Autobiography and Letters of Mrs. Margaret Oliphant*, *William Blackwood and His Sons: Annals of a Publishing House*, and six essays about 'the women question' written across the span of her forty-five year career. I show how

Oliphant negotiated the ideological limits inscribed around womanhood to create and appropriate a suggestively domestic space for the professional woman, a figure fraught with sexual and moral suspicion at the time, in the masculine literary domain of cultural reproduction.

As this statement implies, then, I consider the effects of and on the value perceived to inhere to specifically gendered (and genred) identities available for realisation within the capitalist operations of the periodical market place. I demonstrate how Oliphant capitalises on the orthodoxies of the middle-class ideal of womanhood she claimed to embody in order to guarantee her safe authority as a commodifier of cultural products and to prevent her labouring body from being implicated in that process of commodification. In addition, I show that whereas her valued identity depended on the seclusion of her (re)productive body within the domestic confines of idealised maternity, the identities available to men of letters accrued value according to the degree to which they were able to establish an individualised command of the literary and cultural market.

Since much Victorian literature first circulated in periodicals, it seems imperative that the industry itself come under closer scrutiny as an influential intersection of cultural, market, and social interests and requirements. I will do some of the groundwork by establishing that intersection as highly gendered in its determinations of value and permitted modes of public self-expression.

This work is dedicated to the memory of my grandmother, Jessie Robinson, and to my mother, Lea Spence: women of wisdom and strength.

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Introduction

As the Victorian period began, the many changes to the production of *belles lettres* were a reaction to the eighteenth century's perception of writing as the gentlemanly occupation of a presumed social elite. This class's defining abundance of leisure and economic independence was thought to ensure authorial 'disinterestedness'. The necessity for this quality was entrenched enough by 1865 for Matthew Arnold to formalise it with his hierarchising opposition between Philistines and the cultural children of light. The anxiety which at once energised and stabilised this polarisation sprang from two sources: the eighteenth-century's middle-class takeover of culture and that group's wholesale conversion of cultural production to a variation of industrial capitalism (Feltes *Modes* 3). In the hands of these self-defined sovereigns of commerce, both literature and its producers became overtly subject to all the market forces of commodification. In the early years of the nineteenth century these forces included the industry-wide escalation of literary pay rates to secure the kind of intellectual product which could be expected to generate a high return for the publisher in either economic or cultural terms. On the one hand, this change immediately democratised the profession of letters. The possibility of making a living from writing opened the floodgates to an educated group previously excluded by virtue of its need for assured earnings. On the other hand, the change also permitted suspicions about the economic motives of intellectual labour to continue to situate professional writers within a

hierarchy of cultural producers.

Nowhere was this tension between literary and market orientation more acute than in the nineteenth century's expanding periodical industry. Its origin, however, was not contemporary with that increase. The tension itself is apparent in the eighteenth-century's enduring association of the commercial press with locales like Grub Street and of paid writers with categories like 'hack.' Labels of this nature threatened to implicate not only the periodicals and their employees, but their aspiring editors and proprietors as well. As a result, nineteenth-century founders of new journals, particularly of specialist and literary journals, began to negotiate public identities for themselves which acknowledged their market expertise, but to construct that capacity as the necessary means of disseminating their papers' distinctive participation in cultural regulation. Thus, the competition underwriting successful domination of the literary market place imbued the editorial figure with a form of valued manliness that resonated with the correlative materialities implicit to both capitalism's economic basis and reproductive manhood. This particularly entrepreneurial method of self-realisation remained unavailable to writers because market-innocence was essential to their acquisition of cultural authority. Consequently, they needed to disavow cognizance of their economic potential. Relative to the patriarchal figure of the editor, then, the literary producer was a feminised subordinate whose status within the field of writers rested at least partly on the perceived value of the genre chosen for public

self-expression.

The nineteenth century was also the period during which many women began to make an acceptable living writing novels. In spite (or perhaps because) of its economic utility, fiction came to be the most devaluable of literary forms. This depreciation owed as much to the genre's association with 'women's work' as it did to fiction's necessary capture of a large readership as the primary measure of worth. Certainly, many authors of both sexes garnered much credit and celebrity for themselves and their publishers. One need only consider the careers of Charles Dickens, George Eliot, the Trollopes, Bulwer-Lytton, and Samuel Warren. But even these stars always remained several cultural cuts below such writers of nonfiction as Carlyle and Arnold. The increasingly specialised journals played a large role in maintaining this gendered hierarchy of genres. Because prose commentary in and of itself possessed little mass appeal, its inclusion in a periodical tacitly expressed the editor's intention to transcend market interests in favour of cultural service. Such a gesture in seeming contempt for the market place underwrote the rise of many literary periodicals to influence. Ironically, these same journals' continuous serialisation of fiction and publication of other 'light' literatures subsidised the prestige of this largely masculine enclave of intellectual producers.

This is not to say, of course, that women did not make inroads into the manly domain of cultural debate. Many did, but the conditions of their success

required careful negotiation. One strategy was the authorial adoption of a male persona so that sex remained a fact of private knowledge and domestic life. An alternate strategy was the professional woman's rhetorical appropriation of issues to her 'natural' discursive sphere. By invoking the subjective, familial, and interpersonal aspects of publicly-contended topics, professional women writers ensured that their sex and lack of formal education were not completely successful barriers to their meaningful participation in determining the nature and direction of social and cultural change. These methods enabled women like Harriet Martineau, Eliza Lynn Linton, Frances Cobbe, Helen Taylor, Mona Caird, and Margaret Oliphant to establish careers for themselves in the periodical press by taking up the implications of change with respect to political economy, charity, education, suffrage, women's rights, and literature. However, because of the 'womanly' premise of their authority to speak to these issues, their cultural labour was perceived to be, by definition, both less profound and more 'interested' than that of most male writers. Thus, while popular access to the subject matter of women's literary work was assured by her 'light' addresses, that very accessibility threatened the middle-class ideal of womanhood she had to assume in order to make her way to and within the market place.

My point in this thumbnail history is the nineteenth century's positioning of the figure of woman, whether as the depreciably feminised or authentically feminine contributor, at the juncture of culture with the periodical's capitalist

mode of production. My task in the present work is to show how concepts inhering to capitalism's material basis conditioned the value of professional identities differentially achievable by men and women in and through participation in that system. I have already indicated how the man of letters, in contrast to the man of literary business, necessarily disavowed the economic potential of his professional expression of identity. Given the Victorians' easy ideological concurrence of professional woman with prostitute, a public female identity wrung from such an ambivalently authorised proximity to the market place must abjure all traces of material ambition. To show how the capitalist mode of literary production extends this relinquishment to the body of the female intellectual labourer and how that need for disembodiment plays into and against the negotiation of cultural status, I have applied a conception of capitalism's determining effect on social identity (which owes much to the theoretical Marxism of Norman Feltes) to the broader self-expressive arenas offered by cultural materialism and to the more specific markers of corporeal identity discussed by 'body theory.'

As the foregoing implies, then, I will be examining here capitalism's impact on cultural and authorial (self-)production through nonfiction writing in the periodical press. To explore the limits and possibilities of my mongrel theory, I will use the nonfiction work of Margaret Oliphant (1828-1897), an eminent contributor to the prestigious literary journal *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*,[1]

though she was best known during and after her fifty-year career for her now largely-ignored novels. Through her *Autobiography and Letters*,[2] six of her essays on 'the woman question,' and her last commissioned labour for the Blackwood firm--*William Blackwood and his Sons: Annals of a Publishing House*[3]--I will identify and examine the different exigencies of professional (self-)representation for women and men of letters and for the *APH*'s man of literary business within the capitalist system of *BM*'s production.

I have found the study of Oliphant to be particularly fruitful with respect to my exploration of the effects of capitalism on possible 'writerly' identities. One reason is the abundance of primary material. She wrote something like one hundred novels, three hundred periodical submissions, and numerous biographies, histories, and literary overviews. However, it is not just this phenomenal record that makes Oliphant well worth researching. It is also the fact that most of her oeuvre, as well as her efforts to get it sold, are recoverable. Not only did she usually first publish her books serially in important journals which have been bound and preserved, but her heirs also had the foresight to lodge much of her correspondence and many of her manuscripts with the National Library of Scotland. In addition, the records of the journals to which she submitted her writing, both the serials and discrete articles, often include exchanges between Oliphant and her editors upon matters of payment, the limits of literary expression and the operations of the market. Particulars of the careers and production of few

authors are as readily accessible as Oliphant's, especially of those who were generally perceived to be as important a contributor to literary culture as she was.

Another reason the study of Oliphant has been so useful to me is her apparently acute awareness throughout each of her works of the need to negotiate a version of authoritative identity in the full view of the reading public whose enduring willingness to consume the products of her labour tacitly acknowledged her acceptable self-production. This does not mean that Oliphant always wrote as herself--a highly-regarded female professional--but it does mean that her work should contain evidence of the strategic self-tailoring deemed necessary to her public discussion of literary and social issues. And it does: everywhere. Another part of my task in the present document is to decide precisely who does the 'deeming.' I will also tease out the significance of being under that necessity in the first place. As such an agenda suggests, then, I will be discussing the limits of what can be said, by whom, and how in the periodical press. According to my discoveries within Oliphant's work and the many letters that refer to it, the capitalist conditions of her production are deeply implicated in the nature of these limits, particularly for women writers, even when in masculine guise.

This brings me to the third reason for Oliphant's importance to literary study. Not only was she a successfully prolific writer and a well-chronicled producer, but she was also a highly-skilled professional. At every turn in her work, there are rhetorical traces of her negotiation of a right to write for pay. In

some cases, this meant underscoring her maternal burden of dependents. In other cases, some of which evince a male persona, this meant reconceiving issues as being grounded in general or, more specifically, quotidian interests. Such a reconception of the specialists' domains allows a demonstrable identification with the day-to-day tenets of Victorian ideology to stand in for the authority traditionally derived from formal expertise. To some of the early twentieth-century critics who have undertaken anything like a thorough analysis of Oliphant's life and labour--a short list which has been dominated until very recently by Vineta and Robert Colby and Merryn Williams--her deployment of this strategy has produced a sense of her complicity in perpetuating essentialist ideals and her conservatism in espousing Victorian feminism. To the growing but still limited number of academics--among them John Clarke, Elisabeth Jay, Dale Trela, and myself--who have turned attention to Oliphant, if primarily within the context of her fiction, the necessity for this strategy is one of the many points to be drawn from the example of feminine professionalism her career offers. To me it seems crucial for understanding this necessity to examine her nonfiction reflections upon and of the capitalist system of literary production in her representations of professional authority and identity.

The relatively untrammelled theoretical potential in her work has allowed me to devote my energy to positive demonstrations of Oliphant's attitude towards capitalism and her management of its signifying impingement on that which is

produced to accumulate a material measure of value, but which also circulates within a cultural market where value is a matter of perceptible distance from necessity. That is to say, there are few critics against whom I must first position myself in order to argue for the importance of Oliphant's work to Victorian studies in general and to feminist literary theories in particular. As a result I can simply go to her texts and explain what I find there. And what I find is the body of the intellectual labourer, especially that of the professional female, being invested with all the distanced material potential of capitalist production at the same time that it is carefully divested of association with the market place. In consequence, the writing female body appears never to be subjected to a perceptible process of commodification in the public domain. Instead it can remain at home, fully occupied with the effaced labour that is at once the domestic production and ideological guarantee of its respectable middle-class nature. I see little or no need to buttress the importance of Oliphant's constructions of her paying relations to culture and to womanhood with respect to the study of other female professionals. This is a pleasure often denied in the analysis of more canonical figures whose significance and signifying implications have already been thoroughly polled. The same pleasure of relative solitude inheres to my hybrid theory.

With the exception of a few theorists, like Norman Feltes, Mary Poovey, and Terry Eagleton, whose important works also consider only the fiction careers of canonical Victorians and primarily as they are negotiated in and through the

post-periodical domain of book-publishing, I have found little consistently-relevant research. Consequently I have been freed/constrained to appropriate, translate, and tune their principles for my own discussion of Oliphant's nonfiction. My thinking, however, owes much to their precursive labours. Like them, I conceive identity to be a web constructed through the strategic deployment of often highly conflicted ideological ideals and anathemas by individuals whose authority resides in respective proximity and distance. These criteria, I will argue, invoke values which target specific placements within a hierarchised cultural and social structure. This structure's reflection in the possibilities for the Victorian realisation of professional identity brings aspects of class--as a social origin that is at once expressed and produced through a recognisable cluster of material practices--into dynamic intersection with notions of gender--as the identifying source of 'essential' attributes--and with conceptions of culture, as the field in which struggles over dominant meanings and values takes place. With Pierre Bourdieu, I hold culture to be both a figurative and real market within which literary expressions operate to produce writers' classed identities. It is figurative in the sense that value is symbolically available for attachment to represented realities of self and subject, so that gains accumulate in the ephemeral form of distinction for both producers and consumers. It is real in the sense that value is materially exchanged in the production of both culture and the producers' subsistence. As I will show, however, the kinds and degrees of value accumulable

through participation in the market are always conditioned by the producer's sex.

Besides my focus on nonfiction periodical writing, another difference between my own study and that of other theorists is the emphasis to which I alluded earlier upon the body as a central factor underwriting the achievement of valued identity. In this work I will extend the theoretical frameworks within which Feltes analyses the capitalist operations of the Victorian literary market and Bourdieu discusses the hierarchisation of the social subject (according to patterns of consumption and production of cultural objects) to include the determining implication of the labourer's culturally-productive and always essentially-sexed body in the negotiation of professional being. As the rather convoluted explanations in the preceding may have already indicated, I continue to struggle toward an adequately descriptive vocabulary for my engagement with literature.

Because all three contributors to my own theory take 'materiality' to be both the means and ends of practices which produce or fail to produce value and meaning, it is probably the most belaboured term in my work. At every utterance I intend 'material' to resonate with its full complement of economic and corporeal connotations. For example, when I refer to an individual's potential to materialise in the market place, I am attempting to load the phrase with the Victorian correlation between ideas of intentional financial gain and embodied professional identity. That is, I want to make explicit the tacit danger in the nineteenth century for women writers who fail to prevent a (con)vergence within the public domain of

their ambition and the physical instrument of its fulfilment. While this may seem to conflate cause (public ambition) with effect (prostituted body), I contend that ideological chains inextricably bind the positions to the possibilities of realising a professionally-negotiated version of the middle-class ideal of domestic womanhood.

The previous definition contains two more concepts that are central to my discussion: instrumentalisation and identity realisation. The notion of instrumentalisation is important because it points to the Victorian tension between two forms of participation in the process of commodification: active and passive. The active mode implies cognizant agency in the deployment of objects (a category which, within a capitalist framework, includes people) towards the specific end of economic gain. It also suggests the possession of power, not only to transform a discrete subject into a useful object, but also to determine the value of the instrument to the achievement of the preconceived market goal. Thus, while the active position fairly drips with agency, the passive requires only a willingness to be objectified. Given Victorian strictures about women's expression of self-will, the capitalist system seems to offer a 'natural' opening for feminine participation. The only problem, of course, is the idea that by allowing one's (especially female) self to become the instrument of commodity-production, one must also become an overtly commodifiable and alienable instance of labour or the saleable implement of others' will to corporate and cultural being.

I will be arguing to some extent throughout this work, but particularly in the first and final chapters, that Oliphant handles the concept of instrumentalisation very carefully, since it at once offers to naturalise her professional role and threatens to materialise her vindicating womanhood within public apprehension. Her method, as I identify it, is the rhetorical substitution of her literary labour, as the alienated instrument of her employers' capitalist projects, for her economically-productive body. More simply put, she makes her body of work stand in for her working body at the moment that it becomes subject to (or the object of) commodification. As I have tried to suggest here, capitalism's inevitable alienation of labourers from the direct production of their own lives is critical to Oliphant's believable effacement of her body's public presence. Since this idea is also integral to my use of the term self-realisation in discussions about the achievement of professional identity, I will attempt simultaneous illumination.

I have derived my sense of 'self-realisation' from cultural materialism's claims about the profound actualisation of class and gender ideology in the targeted goals and strategic practices of identity-formation. However, I filter the determining implications of these claims through a reminiscently Marxist premise about the individual production of life (or of a lived self) being an embodied expression of the economic conditions under which subsistence is obtained. As a consequence, the site and fate of the labour required to make that self real within a capitalist context are just as conditioning of the process as the ideology, which

stipulates that specific forms of labour are appropriate and conducive to the valued manifestation of authenticated sexual identity. According to Marxism, labour always results in the production of value, so that the self realised as the effect of subsistence labour may be expected to possess a commensurate degree and kind of value. I have already indicated how Victorian ideology about women and 'persons of letters' makes the achievement of economic and cultural status mutually exclusive. I now suggest that the inevitability of alienation under capitalism wards against the always threatening direct materialisation of the female literary professional as her commodified product circulates within the market.

The process of alienation is initiated at the moment in which the self-realising interests of the capitalist (who owns and controls the means of production) are assigned priority by both labourer and proprietor. These conditions are inherent to the relations in which a periodical is produced, since the cultural and commercial value of a journal was guaranteed by the qualities associated with the name of its corporate head. In an important way the market-realisation of this identity is the first task of the journal, which then derives a commensurate value from that production. The labourer is only completely free in the first instance of this process. The choice is simply whether to contribute or not. If the former, then the writer's subsistence activity is deployed by the proprietor/editor to produce and sustain his own and/or his journal's identity. Editorial intervention or rejection for the sake of a specified homogeneity betrays

the enforcement of this priority. In order to even gain access to the means of literary production, a contributor knowingly submits to this alienation from direct self-production. In view of what I have said about the necessity for a professional woman's perceptible absence or distance from the market place, Victorian periodicals' inevitable appropriation of the writer's self-expressive labour mitigates the commercial contamination of her paid body.

I will illustrate the capitalist facilitation of this effacement in Chapter One's analysis of Oliphant's *A&L*. In this posthumously-published work, probably the most familiar of her *oeuvre* to the present critical generation, Oliphant describes her own engagement with the classed conditions of female professionalism. She does so in terms that construct her writing as a form of domestic labour. All her assertions about the act of writing itself, as well as its market and cultural effects, refer to the private site and maternal motive of its execution in order to refigure it as respectable industriousness and, therefore, integral to the Victorian ideal of middle-class womanhood. While, as I will show, such a gesture did indeed authorise her professional practice, it also placed limits on the strategies she could deploy to achieve and express her public identity and status. For example, by virtue of the ideal and her own claims about the likeness of writing to housework, Oliphant is able to legitimate her literary work as the 'natural' outlet of her maternal essence, but she is simultaneously constrained to veil her cognizant creation of this expression. Oliphant's descriptions in the *A&L* of her mother's

seemingly-miraculous production of comfort, order, and modest plenty in the family home establish both the premise and efficacity of this necessity within a highly-capitalist ethos. In Oliphant's account, this labour and the fact of its effacement are also economically-signifying indices of the family's middle-class identity, since they permit a perception of leisured femininity to be circulated within public apprehension. The idea that the public domain is the arena in which class identity is recognised and accorded both its value and consequent privileges makes the management of the female body crucial to the family's production of its social meaning.

The function of the female body in this scheme is to bear the purely sexed marks of class. In the *A&L*, the production of these visible marks, whether through comportment, housekeeping, fancy needlework, or fiction writing, is also the expression of a consequently-authenticated female nature. However, this resource to a classed nature stipulates that the producer remain perceptibly unself-conscious of the material basis of her execution. This stipulation intertwines with ideological and class requirements for feminine humility and self-denial in such a way that, as Oliphant indicates, the professional Victorian woman was profoundly handicapped in negotiations for pay. Despite the handicap, of course, Oliphant did dicker with her editors and publishers, but her bargaining was most often a protracted solicitation for many small advances for works in progress. Whether speaking in economic or corporeal terms, then, she never allowed a significant

sense of materiality to accumulate around her regular production of literary commodities. I will argue in Chapter One that to do so would have at once exposed her as an anomaly within the category of selfless middle-class matrons by which she authorised and identified her public presence and pointed to the productive female body that served such a self-full end. In these ways, Oliphant's middle-class identity was both a promise and a limit with respect to the stature she could be seen to achieve in literary culture.

Whereas Chapter One discusses Oliphant's self-representation as a novelist, Chapter Two will examine her negotiation of professional authority and identity in six nonfiction articles about 'the woman question': "The Laws Concerning Women" (*BM* 1856), "The Condition of Women" (*BM* 1858), "The Great Unrepresented" (*BM* 1866), "Mill *on the Subjection of Women*" (*Edinburgh Review* 1869), "The Grievances of Woman" (*Fraser's Magazine* 1880), and "The Anti-Marriage League" (*BM* 1896).[4] With the exception of "Grievances," these papers are most often cited in contemporary criticisms of Oliphant as evidence of her antifeminist prudery. The usual lament is the contrast between her fiction's empowering depiction of woman as the undervalued source of family identity production and her nonfiction's apparent complicity in perpetuating traditional stereotypes of womanhood. On the surface, these objections seem to be well-founded, since Oliphant's essays do refuse women's need for both suffrage and paying occupations on the grounds that as a wife (the 'natural' profession of all

women), she is at once represented and provided for in the public domain by her male partner. These positions have contributed to a negative perception of Oliphant that completely overrides the liberal enlightenment acknowledged in her fiction. As a consequence, I can only presume that critics credit the nonfiction mode of her cultural address with a superior degree of truth value with respect to her conception of woman's relation to both society and culture. By fulfilling both Feltes' and cultural materialism's requirements to take into account the economic and professional conditions of the essays' production, I will argue throughout Chapter Two that these dismissals of Oliphant and her work are not only simplistic but naive.

I will show first that at the more complicated level of her arguments' premises, Oliphant's positions in her papers are consistent with those identified in her fiction. Woman is, in both venues, the undervalued material source of family life. According to the ideological conditions of feminine value, however, she cannot take that materialising potential to the market place. Such a move would deeply implicate her sexuality in the market's commodification of her as an instance of labour in service to a publicly-realised female self. I will then demonstrate that at the unconsidered level of the conditions for these arguments' paid circulation, this danger was everpresent to Oliphant. By examining this aspect of her professional practice, I will show that the issues whose address evokes the most apparent conservatism in her work are precisely those which

required the most careful negotiation throughout her career. Editors, publishers, and readers could construe her public support of women's rights to self-determination in the domains of civil or professional being as highly self-serving. Conversely, her conservatism can become a shining model of both feminine self-denial and professional 'disinterest'. As this suggests, then, Chapter Two will seek to establish the implications of her representations of womanhood as evidence of the disembodied status and the means of claiming it in the profession of cultural production.

Throughout the final three chapters I will focus on Oliphant's last work, *APH*. In Chapter Three I will take up her portrayal of William Blackwood, founder of the prestigious publishing house. It may seem that by doing so I am abandoning my analysis of professional self-representation. However, Oliphant's complete reliance for her understanding of Blackwood on his correspondence, the family records, and the version of himself that he helped create for "The Chaldee Manuscript", the controversial feature of *BM*'s first 'real' issue, allows my discussion of her composition to be consistent with my project. Further, Oliphant's portraiture of Blackwood was vetted by his successors, so that we may assume their tacit agreement with her rendering. Whether it was actually accurate or not is impossible to determine, but it clearly served the firm's purposes. In fact, so well did it serve that Oliphant is allowed to merely evoke the father to characterise each of the sons who successively assumed his editorial mantle. My

own purpose in Chapter Three, then, is to uncover the implications of this mediated self-representation and to speculate upon its expected efficacy. I will argue that, within the capitalist system of the paper's production, the requirements of this identity's cultural and commercial value act as the conditions under which contributors successfully produced themselves.

I will show first how the aspiring literary entrepreneur accepts both the burden and the advantage of material acquisition. By emphasising the middle-class source and destiny of this public accumulation of body and money, however, Oliphant begins to neutralise the process of its capacity for moral imputation. That is, by making Blackwood's arrival at and consequent dissemination of classed identity emerge as the object of his capitalist project, the self he seeks to realise (a social self whose most basic public signifier is economic status) appears to serve a cultural rather than a solely personal benefit. This chapter will then look at how Oliphant represents that arrival as the proprietor's entrepreneurial realisation of a valued form of manhood whose self-expressive market instruments are the contributors he selects. In his service and under his aegis, the literary servitors create a myth of genesis for the journal and its owner in "The Chaldee MS". According to its apocalyptic vision, Blackwood, who is the MS's self-named 'sober man of business', becomes a professional watermark of acceptably embodied and highly masculine middle-class humanity. Within the terms of the myth's depiction of the literary industry's early nineteenth-century shift from

petty-commodity production to mature capitalism, figures acquire meaning and value only as they enter capitalist relations with Blackwood, either to aid or compete with his periodical mode of self-production. In Oliphant's hands, this capitalist myth of individual and corporate genesis naturalises the alienation which all contributors must experience as they submit their self-expressive labours to the ruling (editorial) body for determinations of identifying value. I will look briefly at the careers of two members of Blackwood's 'brotherhood' of writers--John Lockhart and William Maginn--to show the divergent destinies of identities realisable under these conditions and the role of the writer's body in predicating and confirming that destiny.

In Chapter Four I will consider the additional influence of first genre and then gender upon this scheme of valuation. By comparing Oliphant's representation of Archibald Alison, the respected author of a political and social history, *The History of Europe, from the Commencement to the Termination of the French Revolution*, to that of Samuel Warren, the trivialised producer of best-selling novels like *The Diary of a Late Physician* and *Ten Thousand a-Year*, I will demonstrate how the intellectual labour of nonfiction can accrue cultural credit for the literary labourer that is unavailable to the relatively feminised producer of 'light' literature. In fact, Oliphant's representation of these two men indicates that while both were highly-valued for their contributions to the magazine's (and the editors') prestige, the cultural and market sites of their accreditation are mutually

exclusive sources of authorial value and signifiers of authentic fitness within the elite literary sanctum of the Blackwoods' professional intimates. This is not to say, however, that an author's predominantly market value precludes inclusion, since the periodical market was also where critical discourse competed to determine the calibrated presence of and genred necessity for a product's (and an author's potential for) such literary merit. Whereas Oliphant says Alison's history possessed little, she also indicates that critics perceived this lack to be appropriate to his self-expressive genre. In contrast, the Blackwoods valued Warren's work because of the debate it inspired over the author's novel technique. These estimations of literary worth clearly refer to the genres' and the specific work's relation to the market place and their capacity for a defining proliferation of the journal's status within the field of cultural competitors.

Having sketched in the rudimentary shape of the literary hierarchy's genred structure, I will then take up in Chapter Four Oliphant's representation of two women in *BM*'s employ: Catherine Gore, named in *APH* as a "fashionable novelist of the day *par excellence*" (2: 235-36), and George Eliot. Both of these women were contemporaries of Warren's and at least as popular as he was. However, of the two, only Eliot benefits from the critical discourse that surrounded each woman's regular production of new fiction. In Gore's case, initially high attributions of stature were reversed by virtue of the discovered abundance of her name's public circulation. That is, critics pounced upon Gore's named market

plenitude as evidence of her unfitness for cultural substance. According to Oliphant, the Blackwoods provided a net for Gore's fall from literary grace by covering over her prolific professional production with their respectable masthead. The only time the assigned value of Eliot's ample self-expression undergoes such a threat is when the fact of her disguised womanhood emerges within the context of her illicit relation to Lewes. Then, as Oliphant observes, Eliot's literary production becomes indistinguishable in the public mind from her sexual activity. In both cases, the abyss yawns at the moment of the female body's named convergence with the market. However, whereas Gore's public individualisation requires the professional coverture offered by the Blackwoods' appropriation of her self-productive labour, Eliot's enables the couple to transform her difference from ordinary, middle-class womanhood into evidence of her literary singularity, or, in other words, of her genius. In Oliphant's version of these women's careers, then, Gore's professional life is redeemed by capitalism's inevitable alienation of her from direct self-production within the market, while Eliot's cultural being is both substantiated and guaranteed by her refusal to be subsumed within others' self-identifying projects.

In Chapter Five I will consider the manner in which Oliphant uses the middle-class ideal of femininity to inform her *APH* representations of both her respectable professional identity and her middling status as a contributor to *BM*. As I will show, her strategies here are consistent with those I have identified in her

A&L and essays. That is to say, in all of these documents, writing is first and foremost the domestic labour which facilitates her maternal production of her family's life and only secondarily a professional expression of her acquired cultural expertise. Whereas she establishes the 'natural' impetus for her paid self-expression in the *A&L* with disclaimers about her "perfectly artless art"(86), she domesticates her capitalist participation throughout *APH* by transforming the highlights of her career into an anecdotal backdrop for the history's formal objective: the public production of the Blackwood name. I will argue that in doing so she at once enacts her likeness to quotidian womanhood and obviates the need for self-disclosure at her defining labours. However, her claim to what she says was an editorially-imposed category of value--"general utility woman" (*APH* 2: 475)--suggests the conditions and place of this 'womanly' definition within the capitalist system of literary production. Her role, as she declares and executes it, is the paid telling of tales, whether fictional, cultural, or social, in the service of others' identity-production. In her own view she is merely the supplier of literary grist to the Blackwoods' periodical mills. Thus, it is the subordinated alienation inherent to her place within the capitalist system, even more than its expressive mode, which essentialises and legitimates her professional practice.

Throughout Chapter Five I will argue that Oliphant's construction of the contributors' necessarily feminised relations to both the editor and the market marks out the conditions of periodical production as 'natural' correlates of the

ideological requirements woman must fulfill in the domestic domain. Accordingly, just as her acceptable self-realisation at home will underwrite and contextualise the value of the identities her labour facilitates, so does Oliphant's representation of her professional self-production in *APH* provide a middle-classing context and stabilising continuity for the history of capitalist ascent which she narrates. The professional execution of this labour remains a tacit capacity of the embodied female identity it threatens to materialise within the public domain. Oliphant's response to this threat is to represent herself throughout *APH* in autobiographical fragments which both enact and assert a purely subjective and (thus) emphatically feminine engagement with the profession of letters. As one might expect, then, she never clearly describes either herself or her writerly practice. Instead, she offers often deeply intimate glimpses of her career's personal effects. These effects emerge in part as the material production of her livelihood. But they are also the effaced or dematerialised production of a literary identity whose sole apprehensible public aspect is its body of submitted self-expressions. Since Oliphant specifies the source of this production to be her intellect, and the object of her labour to be the proving out of her mind's potential for alienated market and cultural value, her body never verges on commodification within the market. By making her subjectivity the source and destiny of her productive labour, she effectively veils her body within the domestic privacy that is a material sign of her middle-class respectability.

Notes

1. *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* will be designated hereafter as *BM*.

2. The *Autobiography and Letters* will be designated hereafter by *A&L*.

3. *Annals of a Publishing House* will be referred to throughout this work as *APH*.

4. I will use "Laws", "Condition", "Unrepresented", "Mill", "Grievances", and "League" respectively to refer to these works.

Chapter One

"[M]aking pennyworths of myself"

Margaret Oliphant originally intended the fragments that eventually comprised her *A&L* to be a private legacy of self-narrative for her sons. Though she considered the idea that they might arrange, edit, and publish her pieces of memoir at some point, she also says that they would probably regard this "mother's story" as too sacred for public consumption despite the income that could be generated by public interest in her tale once she had died (*A&L* 65). After the death of the last of her boys, however, Oliphant's avowed intent becomes to leave "a little more money" to the dependent nieces who survived her (75). Although she protests that the self-consciously economic and public trajectory of this scheme was "no evil aim," she also recognizes that the nature, implications, and consequent requirements of a public document are radically different from those of the private record she claims to have envisioned originally (75). Despite these concerns, the narrative that follows this disclaimer is remarkably similar to that which precedes it (with the possible exception of an increased tendency to name-dropping) and no revisions are evident in the earlier MS fragments (Jay 27).

This consistency suggests that Oliphant's strategies of self-representation, ostensibly intended for consumption only within the private sphere of her family, were conformable to the more public domain in which they finally circulated, but then her production of herself as 'worthy mother' had always been integral to her

production of the many pennyworths of literature constituting her livelihood. In Laurie Langbauer's terms, "the relation of the private . . . to the public . . . authorizes the writing[,] . . . constitute[s] the form of autobiography, and [the] stake in it" (126). Her children and other dependents had always been the most ready justification for her participation in the republic of letters, but her legitimate authority and status within the public domain depended on different (and somewhat contradictory) criteria from those of private motherhood. Elizabeth Jay identifies the conflict as being between maternity's call to "self-subordination and learning to let go, while [professionalism] requires a degree of tenacious self-realization" (3). I will argue, however, that this conflict was even more acute than Jay indicates. For the writer, legitimacy and stature depended on a perceptible disinterest in the work's potential to produce economic and cultural gains. For the mother, disinterest in all things public was also an ideological requirement, but it was to be made manifest as ignorance. Such competing imperatives describe the "essential ambiguity" that Pierre Bourdieu says "result[s] from the discrepancy between the (symbolically) subversive dispositions linked to [her] position in the division of labour and the . . . conservative function attached to the position, between the subjective image of the occupational project and the objective function of the occupation" (366).

Given Oliphant's nearly constant and well-known crises of economic need, the necessary pose of disinterestedness was not possible. As substitutes for this

attribute of literary selflessness, Oliphant chose those of 'the natural writer' who happened to be a woman and a mother, who also happened to get money for her public expressions of that similarly natural identity. Because Oliphant was a member, by birth and choice as I will show, of the middle class, selflessness was as integral to her ideological standing as a respectable and worthy mother as it was for Arnold's idealised "children of light" who pursued the betterment of culture with "heaven bestowed . . . passion" and "a general *humane* spirit" (108-09). Selflessness exacted a variety of effacements from the middle-class Victorian woman. She must be seen to surrender her will, ambition, labour, and body. In the *A&L*, Oliphant executes them all.

I will show, however, that she deploys the requisite denials to conflate a particularly middle-classed configuration of womanhood with particularly culturally-valued classes of writer: realistic fiction author and critical commentator. Despite her best efforts, her strategies of self-construction are more successful in their alignment of private and professional attributes for the female fiction writer than they are for the cultural, social, and (perhaps) literary critic. I will look first at Oliphant's method of self-representation as a woman, a mother, and, finally, a writer-of-tales-for-pay, in order to demonstrate how she successfully negotiated the dangerous and vulnerable boundary between private and public womanhood. When she claims to start writing her memoirs deliberately for the public, she points to this boundary with her rhetorical and

structural erasure of her body and her containment of its signifying attributes and possibilities within the 'natural' scope of middle-class female identity. "[T]hrough [such] uses of the body" Bourdieu's work suggests, she executes "the most indisputable materialization of class [nature]" (190). While this bid for safe respectability did permit her authoritative participation in the literary profession, it also possessed several disadvantages.

The double-edged nature of Oliphant's strategic self-representation will emerge when I turn to her comparative estimates of her own professional and cultural status as measured against 'stars' like Trollope and Eliot. In these discussions, she indicates the easy association of her 'natural' call to production with the overproductive demand of the literary market place. It is, she insists, an inevitable effect of her dire need to provide an adequate subsistence for her family. I will show, then, that within her own writing she anticipated the roles of her known female body and her classing management of it in determining the limits of her canonical potential as a fiction writer and in qualifying her for the label of 'hack-writer' (with respect to her writing generally) that was to depreciate her reputation for the hundred years that have followed the zenith of her career. I will argue that, from Oliphant's perspective, the woman's private(ly) toiling body can legitimately take up the professional's pen for the simple reason that writing is one more instance of alienable domestic work (Mermin 18). I will also show that at precisely the same time this strategy of legitimation imposes necessary limits upon

the degree and type of success to be garnered. Further, I will demonstrate how the female body that executes fiction-for-pay is more easily and more believably distanced from the market than the female body that produces nonfiction-for-pay (opinion-for-hire/opinion-on-demand), though Oliphant herself felt that her fiction was the most 'interested' of her literary self-productions. I will prepare to argue more comprehensively in subsequent chapters that authorial distinction depended on Victorian culture's perception of the 'natural fit' between the author's sex, the particular modes and methods of expression, and available spaces in a hierarchy of self-expressive forms.

* * *

Oliphant's childhood passed in the very secluded and quiet domestic environment required by her authoritarian father's anti-social nature and his traditional ideas about silent children (*A&L* 11, 14). In contrast, her mother was a gregarious woman with a flair for story-telling, who entertained Oliphant with "Bible stories, bits of family history, ballads, tales of the saintly Queen Margaret who had brought the arts of civilisation to Scotland, Shakespeare, Pope, Wordsworth, Burns and Scott" in lieu of formal schooling (Williams 4). By six years old, Oliphant was able to read, and by nine was shocking the circulating librarian (but not her mother) with her attempts to borrow "an immoral novel by Bulwer Lytton" (Williams 4). Literature of all types, but particularly periodicals, were an important part of the Wilson family's self-construction of unity and

identity. The family members read together in the evening and debated the issues taken up by the press:

> We lived in the most singularly secluded way. I never was at a dance till after my marriage, never went out, never saw anybody at home. Our pleasures were books of all and every kind, newspapers and magazines, which formed the staple of our conversation, as well as all our amusement. (*A&L* 16)

It seems clear that these debates shaped the family's political and ideological affiliations because several of the 'hot' issues of the day that came to them through the press--such as the number of needy unemployed, the reform of the Scottish National Presbyterian Church, and Anti-Corn Law activism--were taken up by the entire family as public gestures towards a privately determined identity:

> It was in the time of the Anti-Corn Law agitation, and I was about fourteen. There was a great deal of talk in the papers, which were full of that agitation, about a petition from women to Parliament upon that subject, with instructions to get sheets ruled for signatures, and an appeal to ladies to help in procuring them. It was just after or about the time of our great charity, and I was in the way of going thus from house to house [collecting orders from the needy, which her brother would fill with funds supplied by Mr. Wilson, who was treasurer of the relief fund, and then deliver]. Accordingly I got a number of these sheets, or probably Frank [her oldest brother] got them for me, and set to work. (*A&L* 14, 17)

Although Oliphant calls her family "tremendously . . . Radical" (10), the anti-corn law movement was a conservatively middle-class bid (made, to a large extent, by the women of that group) to intervene in the creation of national policies and the 'hands-on' charity work was an important middle-class token of surplus (since

both time and money were implicitly possessed in enough quantity to spare some for the less fortunate). It is what Bourdieu calls a "status attribute" (278). Clearly Oliphant perceived the consumption of literature as a potentially social act determined in the first instance in the privacy of the home, however much the consequent practice then may have circulated within the public domain (as did the family's projects and Oliphant's published account) as a marker of identity and status. From her descriptions of her earliest writing, it becomes apparent that she perceived her authorship as a similar type of effaceable domestic production whose seemingly accidental importance in the determination of social and economic substance gave credence to her authorising refusal of market knowledge and interest (Sanders 63).

Oliphant's reminiscences about her life before she married reveal that her mother laboured long and hard with "her tender hands [to make Oliphant's] . . . undergarments [of] fine linen and trimmed with little delicate laces, to the end that there might be nothing coarse, nothing less than exquisite about [her]; that [she] might grow up with all the delicacies of a woman's ideal child" (*A&L* 12). Mrs. Wilson's domestic production of the specifically middle-class (almost fairy-tale) ideal, which is realised by the fancy needlework of a loving mother, demonstrates in a literal way the determining importance of invisible domestic production in the construction of an individual identity. It is 'covered over' woman's work which will signify class belonging at the level of public apprehension. That is, Oliphant

knows (and presents to her reader) who and what she was (exquisite, delicate, and refined) by virtue of the unperceived quality of materiality with which her mother ornaments the child's unmentioned body (the classed body that dematerializes in Oliphant's description of her mother's determining labour). When Oliphant goes on to speak of her first formal writing attempt, she posits it as a type of domestic work that is interchangeable with that more traditional form of private feminine occupation (Sanders 57):

> [M]y mother had a bad illness, and I was her nurse, or at least attendant. I had to sit for hours by her bedside and keep quiet. I had no liking then for needlework, a taste which I developed afterwards, so I took to writing. There was no particular purpose in my beginning except this, to secure some amusement and occupation for myself while I sat by my mother's bedside. (*A&L* 16)

As Valerie Sanders points out, writing for Oliphant is initially a variety of fancy work that occupies her idle time with the production of nonessentials (markers of surplus), the possession of which is vital to a particularly middle-class identity at the same time that the association with needlework "demonstrates the lack of any egocentric ambition" (63).

This first work of Oliphant's was not published, but the habit of writing was established:

> I had no table even to myself, much less a room to work in, but sat at the corner of the family table with my writing-book, with everything going on as if I had been making a shirt instead of writing a book. The table was in the middle of the room, the centre around which everybody sat with candles or lamp upon it. My mother sat always at needlework of some kind, and talked to whoever might be present

> and I took my share in the conversation, going on all the same with my story, the little groups of imaginary persons, these other talks evolving themselves quite undisturbed. (23-24)

Clearly Oliphant is again aligning her literary labour with the domestic productivity of her mother and both are at their approved (because interruptible) work in the physical and intellectual centre of the family's private world. Oliphant also states that "[a]fter a while it came to be the custom that I should every night 'read what I had written' to [the assembled family] before I went to bed. They were very critical sometimes, and I felt while I was reading whether my little audience was with me or not, which put a good deal of excitement into the performance" (23). While Oliphant here suggests the family's incorporation of her serialized writing as another opportunity for its self-identifying practice of critical literary and social discourse, she also inscribes the serialized form itself as wholly amenable (in its consumption and production) to the conventional operation of an idealized domestic realm.

Margaret Maitland was one of the first books to be claimed by Oliphant[1] that was written and criticized, piece by piece, at the family table. She implies that it was an unconscious production of domestic fancywork that serendipitously possessed economic value. She also suggests that it resulted in the quite accidental conversion of domestic work into what would become a lifelong professional occupation, a formulation that seems to absolve Oliphant "of some degree of responsibility for her choice of career" (Sanders 55):

> I went on writing, and somehow, I don't remember how, got into the history of Mrs. Margaret Maitland. . . . [My brother Willie] took my MS to Colburn, then one of the chief publishers of novels, and for some weeks nothing was heard of it, when one morning came a big blue envelope containing an agreement by which Mr. Colburn pledged himself to publish my book on the half-profit system [she eventually received £150 for the novel], accompanied by a letter from a Mr. S. W. Fullom, full of compliments as to its originality etc. (*A&L* 18)

Until Oliphant married her cousin Frank in 1852, her writing retained its association with nonessential labour. Jay observes that such a marginalisation of her professional endeavours is a familial reflection of the cultural anathema towards self-importance (257). Oliphant's recollections support this idea. She says her success was

> [f]irst and foremost . . . the most extraordinary joke that ever was. Maggie's story! My mother laughed and cried with pride and happiness and amazement unbounded. . . . I was wonderfully little moved by the business altogether. I had great pleasure in writing, but the success and the three editions had no particular effect on my mind [except that she can recall it precisely some thirty-eight years after the fact]. . . . My head was steady as a rock. I had nobody to praise me except my mother and [brother] Frank, and their applause--well it was delightful, it was everything in the world--it was life,--but it did not count. They were part of me, and I of them, and we were all in it. . . . Other matters, events even of our uneventful life, took so much more importance in life than these books--nay, it must be a kind of affectation to say that, for the writing ran through everything. But then it was also subordinate to everything, to be pushed aside for any little necessity. (*A&L* 19-23)

From her vantage point of 1888, Oliphant looks back on her origins to see writing as the domestic practice pervading all of life and consolidating the family members within a collective 'self.' Applause from this group (or credit for her success)

was life itself, but could not be counted, either materially--with the acknowledged stature of an economic contributor and a protected writing place--or ideologically, since this domestic work produced a collective identity whose praise would suggest unacceptable self-fulness. That is, the family 'self,' of which Oliphant was now a professional female constituent, could not be seen to be dependent on her economic (but nonetheless domestic) labour because she would seem to become a perhaps needed source of the family's material life. On the one hand, even the suggestion of such a dependency would cause her to trespass upon her father's domain of family provision and undercut the class identity implied by one-income subsistence. On the other hand, acknowledgement of her (publicly-circulated) labour's contribution to the family's production itself would attach the usual Victorian suspicions of sexuality to her professionally productive body. Oliphant's insistence on anonymity for this work facilitated the public and private pretense that 'no (identifiable) body' had actually executed the paid labour.

This pattern of erasure continued into Oliphant's adult life, even when she was completely dependent on the proceeds of her writing. She always wrote late at night, after the children were in bed and all company had left. In her introduction Annie Coghill, Oliphant's niece and editor/compiler of the *A&L*, observes Oliphant's careful presentation of a conventionally gracious and demurely refined domestic picture to the society that acknowledged her professional success by gathering at her house:

> If the visitors were congenial, her charm of manners awoke, her simple fitness of speech clothed every subject with life and grace, her beautiful eyes shone (they never sparkled), and the spell of her exquisite womanliness made a charmed circle round her. She . . . had, as a family inheritance, lovely hands, which were constantly busy, in what she called her idle time, with some dainty sewing or knitting . . . and she had a most exquisite daintiness in all her ways and in the very atmosphere about her which was 'pure womanly'. (viii)

The language of this description associates Oliphant's exquisite daintiness with the private production of a social identity. It echoes the terms in which she described her mother's domestic production of her own sense of self. Here she is shown presenting a classed and sexed body to the visiting public and carefully withdrawing the professionally labouring body from her publicised domestic world. To put a professional self forward, to display it to the world in its execution of paid self-productivity, would be to construct it, as I suggested earlier, as a prostituted body (Harris 382). It is a fear to which Oliphant obliquely refers when her dead sons can no longer even appear to be the objects of her autobiographical writing:

> How strange it is to me to write all this, with the effort of making light reading of it, and putting in anecdotes that will do to quote in the papers and make the book sell! It is a sober narrative enough, heaven knows! and when I wrote it for my Cecco [her recently-deceased youngest son] to read it was all very different, but now that I am doing it consciously for the public, with the aim (no evil aim) of leaving a little more money, I feel all this to be so vulgar, so common, so unnecessary, as if I were making pennyworths of myself. (*A&L* 75)

As we will see her do in "The Great Unrepresented", Oliphant chooses her

sex and its essential functions as her primary category of self-identification (Linda Peterson 165) and her writing, by virtue of its execution being ideally erased, becomes the invisible, endless domestic work that she will be seen marking out as woman's 'natural share' in "The Grievances of Woman". It is also the accomplishment of what Oliphant regarded as her mother's most remarkable achievement: "My mother was all in all. How she kept everything going, and comfortably going . . . I can't tell; it seems like a miracle" (*A&L* 11). Indeed, her confession about the place of writing in her life reveals that to her writing was just one expression of her own womanhood and maternity (Davis 277):

> I always avoid considering formally what my mind is worth. . . . I have written because it gave me pleasure, because it came natural to me, because it was like talking or breathing, besides the big fact that it was necessary for me to work for my children. That, however, was not the first motive, so that when I laugh inquiries off and say that it is my trade, I do it only by way of eluding the question which I have neither time nor wish to enter into. (*A&L* 4)

Maternity, then, or the need to support her children, provided Oliphant with the opportunity to subsume her professional labours into her 'natural' identity as a woman (Sanders 65). By denying it as her "first motive," she is attempting to ward off associations of the proven (re)productive potential of her body with the market place. Instead she claims her writing as her "trade," a self-deprecating (and specifically classing) gesture that disqualifies her for the categories of artist and genius on the basis of her necessarily-interested productivity. That is, she

instrumentalises the writing (in the sense that she purposefully deploys it) in the deliberate(d) production of a selfless womanhood labouring in her family's service. The writing does not instrumentalise her as it might be thought to do when 'the muse' inspired men of genius and artists to a suggestively helpless production of cultural and economic master(ing)-pieces. Her "continuous . . . transform[ation of] necessities into strategies, constraints into preferences" are, in Bourdieu's view, evidence of her "internalization of the [social] structure" according to which she may "class[ify]" herself (175). Although her confession suggests that she knew her mind--as the well-spring of her material labour--possessed implicit but unspecified "worth," her autobiography reveals that she often felt she did not receive the just recompense of her toil from her employers, in terms of both money and recognition:

> I had not seen very much of John Blackwood, but he was already a friend, with that curious kind of intimacy which is created by a publisher's knowledge of all one's affairs, especially when these affairs mean struggles to keep afloat and a constant need of money. He had bidden me draw upon him . . . and I was grateful and apt to boast of it, as I have a way of doing; so that people who have served me this way, even when as sometimes happened, the balance changed a little, have always conceived themselves to be my benefactors. (*A&L* 68-69)

Clearly Oliphant constructs herself here as a dependent pillar of the Blackwoods' public status. The Colbys, always equivocal in their estimation of the author's value, put it this way: "If she did not, except once, provide them with the profits of a best seller, she was nevertheless a competent and steady source of

income for them. Her indefatigable pen supported her and her family for a lifetime, but it also helped to support her publishers" (182). The heads of the publishing house, who have control over economic disbursement and authorial credit (or value), are the structural equivalents of the neglectful and thoughtless husband we will see her discuss in the next chapter's analysis of her article "The Grievances of Women." In this paper she says that men's blind self-importance and -centredness create constant crises of need for arduous but invisible female productivity. This relationship, in conjunction with the often-noted extravagance of Oliphant's lifestyle[2] justified her perpetual professional "fecundity" (James 358) or, in her own conception, the necessarily unending expression of her individual and feminine (which is to say, her maternally domestic) nature (Jay 29).

* * *

Throughout the *A&L*, Oliphant most often discusses her production of fiction, while she refers to her articles primarily as sureties for loans from her publishers or as rejected works that index, at a professional level, her failed (or failing) execution of her domestic labours. For example, she writes about the time of her husband's impending death in Italy:

> I had to go on working all the time, and not very successfully, our whole income, which was certain for the time, being L20 a-month, which Mr. Blackwood had engaged to send me on the faith of articles. To think of the whole helpless family going to Italy, children and maid and all, upon that alone! . . . Of course this must have added to Frank's depression, for which I was sometimes inclined to blame him, not knowing how ill he was . . . I have the

> clearest vision of him sitting close by the little stove in the corner of the room, wrapped up, with a rug upon his knees, while I sat near the window, trying with less success than ever before to write and longing for a word, a cheerful look, to disperse a little the heavy atmosphere of trouble. (52-53)

This passage associates Oliphant's concretely present body, as it labours to produce contracted nonfiction, with lapses of her feminine nature: her family is precariously and inadequately provided for, she cannot divine the truth of her husband's condition, and she expresses a desire only for her own relief. In other words, she is failing in feminine selflessness and silence (with respect to her suffering and her husband's lack of contribution to the family's subsistence) at precisely the moment that she materialises in her narrative as a nonfiction writer. Oliphant also represents this nonfiction-writing body as unable to produce the markers of (middle-class) surplus that have covered over her dependence on the literary market. The scene she describes here emphasises the sweated nature of her nonfiction piece-work and the "heavy atmosphere" of its visible production (53). In this tableau, she appears to be weighted down by her conscious attempt to write for the market, a weight of feminine self-fulness that 'bodies her forth' as a rejected woman of the public market, a type of working-class vendor of her body's literary wares. These goods contribute nothing to her private or public status and, in fact, take her from the tending of her husband that might have alleviated some of his pain or at least revealed to her the true extremity of his illness.[3]

In contrast to the failures of female nature, class identity, and professional

advancement that surround Oliphant's representation of herself as an essayist-for-hire, familial salvation, feminine fulfilment, and literary distinction inform her depiction of fiction writing under similarly desperate conditions:

> It was a very severe winter, 1860-1861, and it was severe on me too. . . . I had not been doing very well with my writing. I had sent several articles, though of what nature I don't remember, to 'Blackwood,' and they had been rejected. Why, this being the case, I should have gone to them . . . to offer them, or rather to suggest to them that they should take a novel from me for serial publication, I can't tell,--they so jealous of the Magazine, and inclined to think nothing was good enough for it, and I just then so little successful. But I was in their debt, and had very little to go on with. They shook their heads of course, and thought it would not be possible to take such a story,--both very kind and truly sorry for me, I have no doubt. I think I see their figures now against the light, standing up, John with his shoulders hunched up, the Major with his soldierly air, and myself all blackness and whiteness in my widow's dress, taking leave of them as if it didn't matter, and oh! so much afraid that they would see the tears in my eyes. I went home to my little ones, running to the door to meet me with "flichterin' noise and glee"; and that night, as soon as I had got them all to bed, I sat down and wrote a story . . . which formed the first of the Carlingford series,--a series pretty well forgotten now, which made a considerable stir at the time, and *almost* made me one of the popularities of literature. . . . I sat up nearly all night in a passion of composition, stirred to the very bottom of my mind. The story was successful, and my fortune, comparatively speaking, was made. (69-70)

Once again Oliphant presents herself in a vendor's pose, though here her body is not revealed as it labours. Instead it bears only the signs of her classed womanhood. She is a distressed woman of at least modest means (since she wears full mourning dress), submitting herself to the male authorities for whose aid she desperately petitions. Their control of access to publication repudiates her desire

to write for the market, indicating, Oliphant suggests, that the interest motivating "such a story" would be detectible somehow to the readers of 'Maga' and would depreciate the value of the entire periodical. Her body, as she struggles for self-control, is a fully-realised maternal body which, after being turned away from consciously economic production, returns to the nurture of her dependents in her threatened domestic realm. Her children's unknowing glee indicates her selfless execution of protective maternity and this thorough self-subordination marks the conversion of her desire for money to the "passion of composition" in which her body again becomes merely the sequestered means of realising the heights of both her literary and maternal potentials. That is, in representing herself in the process of becoming a "comparatively" successful fiction writer, Oliphant this time demonstrates no neglect of her domestic duties. Her passion is carefully disassociated from the production of commodities. It is a matter of "stirred mind" only that allows her to produce herself privately as the ideal middle-class mother and publicly as the successful professional writer whose fiction evokes a parallelled (and appropriately sympathetic) "stir" in others.

The sudden grammatic shifts in this long passage, away from herself as subject and to the passive voice (from "I sat up nearly all night in a passion" to "The story was successful, and my fortune . . . was made" [70]), underscores Oliphant's appropriately feminine lack of self-will and constructs her acquisition of economic and professional advancement as (yet again) entirely accidental, as

something driven by a (perhaps) providential response to her needy embodiment of the maternal ideal rather than by her astute comprehension of the literary market.

Oliphant says, in the last citation, that her "fortune, comparatively speaking, was made" (70). The comparison she refers to must be to her own pre-1861 career because those she makes to other literary contemporaries, like Anthony Trollope and George Eliot, construct her as being of much less 'fortune' in terms of money and prestige. As we will see, however, Oliphant's relatively low economic and literary standing were necessary conditions of the middle-classed maternal underpinnings of her professional identity. That is, because Oliphant conscientiously represented herself throughout her career as a 'real woman' who could do no more than express her authenticity through 'naturally' feminine means (the dependent generation of children and characters, the selfless service of others' needs and demands, the subjective reflection of quotidian reality and emotional life, etc.), she was precluded, by this very authorising reliance on nature, from adopting the self-conscious 'artfulness' that might have produced a 'masterpiece' and the concomitant benefits of higher economic value for her work and greater literary and cultural distinction for herself.

* * *

When Oliphant speaks of Anthony Trollope's work, she notes that he "must have made three times as much as ever I did" (70). She tries to account for this value discrepancy in one of two ways: "I never could fight for a higher price or do

anything but trust to the honour of those I had to deal with. Whether this was the reason why, though I did very well on the whole I can't tell, . . . or whether it was really inferiority on my part" (70). Trollope's work, she has heard, is executed according to technical theories that she is "totally incapable" of specifying with respect to her own writing because it is only her "natural way of occupying [her]self" (4-5). Although Oliphant clearly means 'occupying' here as keeping herself busy, the alternate definition of "inhabiting" also applies. When she writes 'naturally', which is to say without the conscious artifice of theories or the self-conscious pursuit of "the higher objects of art instead of the mere necessities of living" (130), she is 'occupying' or inhabiting herself with the maternal identity that marks creativity out as one of her essential attributes (her "perfectly artless art" [86]) and, therefore as one that she may display without fear of imputation with respect to deliberated ambition (Mermin 33).

Indeed this same fear may also explain her public denials of any capacity to haggle over money matters, although her correspondence with her publishers reveals that she often dickered in the same breath that she disavowed her business sense. Jay says she was "unable to drive hard bargains" because "her expenses always exceeded her income" (21). Oliphant's bind, however, was more complex than this statement suggests. On the one hand, she knows that her ostensible "carelessness of asserting [her] claim" to her work's monetary value has contributed to the low worth of both herself and the products of her labours in

literary culture: "It is so natural to think that if the workman himself is indifferent about his work, there can't be much in it that is worth thinking about" (*A&L* 5). On the other hand, however, the dictates of feminine modesty require her to hide the fact that she is "not indifferent" at all, but must "always turn off [compliments about her industry and all her books] with a laugh" (5). It seems clear that the limits of self-promotion inhere to her legitimising claim to a 'natural' occupation. As she notes later, "how little credit I feel [is] due to me, how accidental most things have been, and how entirely a matter of daily labour, congenial work, . . . the expression of my own heart, almost always the work most pleasant to me, this has been" (67). Her professional investment in middle-class ideology disallows personal credit for that which she claims to have been fitted to do by (and in the full) virtue of her female nature.

Of all the celebrity names Oliphant invokes in the writing of her *A&L*, none occurs with more frequency than George Eliot's. Eliot was one of *BM*'s star authors and though she was associated with the publishing house for many years, she did not appear at any of the literary socials organised by the firm for the promotion of both published works and the paper's prestigious stable of contributors. To Oliphant, Eliot represents the pinnacle of (female) literary success. Her discussion of the causes and effects of this eminence attributes her own relative lack of status to the differences between them with respect to the class and the degrees of 'natural womanhood' each embodied, both in the private

domain where the work was produced and the public realm where the work circulated with acquired value. In effect she is making Bourdieu's point: "The differences between [the stature of] works . . . express the differences between authors' socially constituted dispositions (that is, their social origins retranslated as a function of [their] positions in the field of production)" (20). She also implies the converse: her position in the field of production is a condition of her class origins.

Despite Oliphant's evident knowledge of Eliot's unorthodox (and quite scandalous) common law relationship with Henry Lewes, she represents Eliot in possession of many professional advantages. The first of these is Lewes himself, whose roles of agent, secretary, critic, and suitor to Eliot constructed "a mental greenhouse" around the star (*A&L* 5). Unlike her own, self-made identity--a natural consequence of being, in her words, "a friendless woman with no one to make the best of me" (70)--Eliot's has been carefully cultivated within a highly mediated environment. The result has been the production of Eliot as an anomaly, a female aristocrat of literary culture whose sexualised writing body seems to have been neutralised of its threat (to society and, therefore, to Eliot's viable cultural authority) by its perceived disassociation from the source of her literary creativity. Oliphant observes that Eliot's "great genius [was] distinct from herself, something like the gift of the old prophets, which they sometimes exercised with only a dim sort of perception what it meant" (7). Although it might be argued, as the author

herself suggests, that she was "a little envious" of Eliot (4), it seems clear that Oliphant believes Eliot's genius is not derived from her female nature. Instead she suggests it as a masculine quality that has been bestowed in an almost supernatural fashion.

Eliot here does not write to 'occupy herself', but is 'occupied' by a genius that is barely comprehended by its host. The writing-Eliot seems to be a figure of nearly pure mind to Oliphant. Her body is merely a sequestered vessel whose mediated (which is to say, unnatural and artificial) setting signifies both her belonging within the upper classes of literary and social affiliation (*A&L* 103), and the difficulty of access that marks the cultural value of her (professional) identity and production at a high level (Bourdieu 56). Oliphant constructs Eliot as almost completely without detectable presence anywhere in her private world, but as a much "bigger wom[a]n" than herself in the professional world,[4] whose greater cultural dimensions are substantiated by the "praise and homage and honour" that are the effects of her prophet-like and profitable occupation by genius (*A&L* 8).

In contrast to the singularity to which Oliphant attributes Eliot's high status, she represents herself as profoundly ordinary: "I do feel very small, very obscure, rather a failure all round . . . I acknowledge frankly that there is nothing in me--a fat, little, commonplace woman, rather tongue-tied--to impress anyone" (*A&L* 8). She does not offer her work here as evidence of her mediocrity, but a description of her matronly body and her natural constraint upon public self-expression.

Bourdieu claims that just this sort of descriptive resource to the physical provides an "analogy . . . for the opposition between the [dominated] and the dominant class" of cultural producer that Oliphant perceives to exist between herself and Eliot (382). Such a self-construction also suggests that the purpose behind her comparisons (and perhaps even the *A&L* itself) is to efface any anomalising differences between herself and other middle-class matrons so that she may continue to deploy her private identity as a legitimate source of her public authority. Later in the *A&L*, Oliphant reveals her horror of public self-distinction even amongst those to whom notice is a necessity:

> I was endeavouring with many struggles to repeat to [Mr Frost] something that had produced a laugh [among some "literary people of the most prominent and conventional type" who had been assembled by the lionising Samuel Carter Halls] . . . when suddenly one of those hushes which sometimes come over a large company occurred, and my voice came out distinct--to my own horrified consciousness, at least--a sound of terror and shame to me. (35, 37)

The self-effacing little body, however, which Oliphant emphatically diminishes when she describes it within the public gaze, takes on mythical proportions when she refers to the domestic burdens that it supports and that have determined the limits of her cultural substance:

> I have never known what [freedom from human ties] was. I have always had to think of other people and to plan everything . . . always in subjection to the necessity which bound me to them . . . at the cost of infinite labour, and of carrying a whole little world with me whenever I moved. I have not been able to rest, to please myself, to take the pleasures that have come in my way, but have always been forced to go on without a pause. . . . It seemed rather a fine

> thing to make that resolution [about focussing on the maternal production of virtuous sons rather than the literary production of high-status writing] (though in reality I had no choice); but now I think that if I had taken the other way, which seemed the less noble, it might have been better for all of us. I might have done better work. I should in all probability have earned nearly as much for half the production had I done less. (6)

Within her private setting, Oliphant's body resembles at once Prometheus's (tied to the stake for her knowingly self-sacrificial provision of others), Atlas's (bent labouriously beneath the weight of the world she bears), and Sisyphus's (eternally and futilely rolling the rock uphill). Her physical capacity and nature-driven need to labour for her dependents make her, as her mother was, the miraculous and mythic "all in all" to her children, but also set limits to the self that can be seen to be substantiated by professional and cultural distinction.

Oliphant acknowledges these limitations in an 1865 response to a letter written by one of the Blackwoods about the projected acclaim of *Miss Marjoribanks*, which was then appearing in 'Maga' in installments:

> You make me nervous when you talk about the first rank of novelists & c: nobody in the world cares if I am first or sixth . . . [T]he world can do nothing for me except giving me a little more money, which, Heaven knows, I spend easily enough as it is. But all the same, I will do my best, only please recognise the difference between a man who can take the good of his reputation . . . and a poor soul who is concerned about nothing except the most domestic and limited concerns. (*A&L* 198)

'The good' that Oliphant cannot receive from her reputation is the type of distinction that would foreground the body behind the serialised professional

work, an idea evoking "terror and shame" within the author (37). The world at large (or at least the literary side of it) may know her for the novel's creator, but to vaunt the work in the very process of its production would be to materialise the paid female body in its generation of a popular commodity and to dispel the carefully maintained appearance of Oliphant's leisured middle-class femininity.[5]

Popular success, according to Oliphant, was only desirable to her because it meant more money for her family's realisation of its middle-class birthright. Though she notes throughout her *A&L* that this ambition to keep "a number of people comfortable [was] at the cost of incessant work, and an occasional great crisis of anxiety," she also claims that she "was, after all, only following [her] instincts" for domestic provision (7). Jay points out that her maintenance of these dependents was "the visible guarantee of her successful mingling of the roles of writer and caring woman" (268). There was also a class benefit to be derived from "the infinite labour" which eventually became the most noteworthy aspect of her life (the other being the domestic tragedies that finally left her without a purpose for her work). Industriousness was the self-defining characteristic of the Victorian middle class. Its dedicated capacity for labour legitimated its moral authority over both the higher and lower classes of consumer that it supplied from the market place wherein its 'industriousness' was made manifest and rewarded. Since Oliphant had to be ever-careful to keep her labouring body from public perception, the enormous 'body' of her works that circulated served as evidence of her 'true'

belonging in the middle class that she claimed and that proclaimed the limits of her literary distinction. In an 1876 response to a letter from one of her Blackwood editors, in which she had been told of a favourable mention in the *Edinburgh Review*, she writes:

> How very good of Mr Kinglake to interest himself about the poor little reputation which, alas! "Thae muving things ca'ed weans" have forced me to be so careless of. . . . [I]f ever the time comes that I can lie on my oars, after the boys are out in the world, or . . . when I shall be out of the world, . . . I will get a little credit--but not much now, there is so much of me! What a blessing to be born with Macaulay's temperament and never spend more than one has! It is the best nurse of reputation. (*A&L* 257-58)

Oliphant's ideological need to demonstrate industry and her domestic need for money, then, were fulfilled by her "constant [professional] undertaking of whatever kind of work came to [her] hand," though she clearly knew that she would "pay the penalty in that [she would] not leave anything behind that [would] live" (*A&L* 130). "Posterity," in Bourdieu's words, is a "social privilege" of the highly-placed. (72). Such a privilege is forfeit by reason of Oliphant's dependency for legitimate public identity upon her display of middle-class femininity. Therefore, her "cultural productions . . . are [always] discredited because they recall" the devalued source and identifying intent of her cultural competence (Bourdieu 330). In addition to this guarantor of her 'middling' literary status, she also points in the previous two citations to her necessary availability, both to and within the market. Even further, her qualifying credentials, proclaimed in the first

instance at the level of private life, had to precede her into the public domain. The fact of this requirement indicates the fragility of the boundary for the professional Victorian woman between her rightful, private sphere of authority and the market place where her authority was ambiguously earned credit in her account of a naturally-productive professional female self who cannot or dares not command the mitigating allowances made for stars. On the occasion of a command visit to Queen Victoria in 1868, a visit that immediately preceded the royal granting of a £100 per year pension to Oliphant in recognition of her eminence as a novelist, the author writes to her editor: "I don't know whether I feel most like the Queen of Sheba or the Pig-faced lady!" (*A&L* 219). Within her scheme of self-authorisation, the alternative models for women of public substance are either alienation from class and even national identity or professional freak whose publicised claim to fame is a deformed and bestialised female body.

Both Trollope and Eliot were famous for their novels, though both also wrote in nonfiction genres. Oliphant neither takes this aspect of their careers into account nor compares her own nonfiction to that of any of the leading 'names' of her day. Economically speaking, fiction was of far greater importance to her because "stories . . . meant in each case the bulk of a year's income" (*A&L* 145), to say nothing of the extra she often earned when the serials were published as books after their periodical run. Speaking personally, however, Oliphant says that she had "learned to take perhaps more a man's view of mortal affairs,--to feel that

the love between men and women, the marrying and giving in marriage [which comprised the subject matter of most novels], occupy in fact so small a portion of either existence or thought" (67). The "boiling of the daily [literary] pot" became more and more an instrument of the "good" of keeping the family "pot boiling, and maintain[ing] the cheerful household fire" (131). Although Jay refers to this phrase as Oliphant's "recapture . . . of cliche to reinvest her writing with the trappings of maternal solicitude" (304), it also suggests her fiction writing as the most 'interested' or market-driven of her literary work. She construes its writing as a kind of classing indulgence of her feminine helplessness and female desire for sensational stimulation and material comfort:

> I am afraid that the immense relief of getting over a crisis gave a kind of reflected enjoyment to the trouble between, and that these alternations of anxiety and deliverance were more congenial than the steady monotony of self-denial, not to say the still better kind of self-denial which should have made a truer artist [of] myself. (*A&L* 130)

Oliphant claims here both personal and literary self-indulgence. Had she written less, she would have produced the "rarity" which Bourdieu observes underwriting a kind of cultural value that never attached to either the author or her work beyond her own lifetime (468-69). Had she spent less, however, she wold have seemed a wholly unsuccessful writer. As Jay notes, this very "[s]ucess [thus] created its own penalties" with "continuous [demands for] creativity" (19).

As I have indicated, Oliphant felt that the "higher objects of art" were served in neither the pursuit of "the mere necessities of daily life" (*A&L* 130) nor

the remunerative revelation of "the love between men and women" (67), both of which she has constructed throughout the *A&L* as woman's natural province. She has learned by 1894, when she writes of her feminine self-indulgence through fiction, that the personal and professional benefit to be derived from such commodifiable labour is merely material and highly transient. In addition, she has discovered that the "good" of her labour is made manifest only when the master she serves appropriates her product as an instrument of His/his own self-fulfilment. The children she decided to produce "for the service of God" (6) have been taken (according to her Presbyterian tenets) by Him and the 'writerly' self she produced in the service of her family, publishers, and culture has been denied the means of its enduring literary existence--a place in the canon--while the objects of her service have prospered from the consumption of her products . That is, Oliphant knows by 1894 that she must be perpetually alienated from her 'naturally' interested (i.e. necessarily economic) domestic (re)production of herself in order to sustain her legitimising claims to true and viable womanhood. In still other words, she is trapped by her dire needs (to provide in the professional public domain and to do so in feminine middle-class respectability) into a gendered sphere of depreciated production.

Though she has always claimed, as she does in the same 1894 entry, that "[a]t my most ambitious of times, I would rather my children had remembered me as their mother than in any other way, and my friends as their friend" (130), the

realisation of this ambition is beneficial only to the moral authority of the private female identity that motivates her public career. Her dismissive gesture toward the most common subject of contemporary (especially feminine) fiction, which she uses as evidence of her acquired ability to supersede her female nature (she has "learned to take . . . more a man's view of mortal affairs" [67]), somewhat obliquely acknowledges the superior value ascribed to the more masculine writing of nonfiction prose in which the subject and the writing itself are suggested as possessing greater cultural centrality. Jay notes that it also "typically paid better than fiction" (246). Oliphant's comments in the *A&L* about her production of nonfiction writing attempt to cast a very feminine gloss on her ambition to produce work which (unlike the popular Carlingford series) she could "take . . . *au grand sérieux*" (86). She says,

> I came to a pause [in a busy and demanding domestic life] and found that every channel was closed and no place for any important work. I had always a lightly flowing stream of magazine articles, & c., and refused no work that was offered to me; but the course of life could not have been carried on on these, and a large sum was wanted at brief intervals to clear the way. (*A&L* 126)

This citation reveals Oliphant's negotiation of the professional domain of nonfiction writing as a carefully staged appropriation of some if its forms to her own legitimate sphere of production. The language in which she describes this production minimises the danger of its being seen as a transgression into masculine territories of serious and disinterested discourse. Oliphant's ambivalent use of the

word 'important' here distinguishes the superior cultural importance of nonfiction from the more personal significance of her immediately remunerative fiction work.[6] She at once suggests the 'light' nature of her own nonfiction work and acknowledges the natural and professional limits of her participation in this discursive mode. The natural limit is her womanhood itself. Its irresistible imperatives will always ensure the 'interestedness' of her literary labours. The professional limit is the unnamed keeper of the "channel" who determines both the nature of the 'importance' Oliphant will acquire--economic or cultural--and her access to either.

Throughout Oliphant's career, *BM*'s editors were most often the male gatekeepers to whom she submitted herself and her work for determinations of value, validity, and market viability. The mere fact of publication under the firm's masthead was in itself "a great thing" to her in terms of distinction (29), but she was always aware that her femininity could be perceived simultaneously as threatened by and threatening to territorial boundaries of gendered discourse in what she knew was regarded as the "most manly and masculine of magazines" (160).

The same 1855 letter to her editors in which she notes the gendered nature of their publication contains several examples of the types of self-effacement and reassurance that Oliphant successfully made before her male employers. The letter opens with the author's protest of classed nature against what was clearly a

Blackwood reference to her overproduction: "I am afraid what you say about my labours is scarcely complimentary, but a naturally restless temperament makes it almost a necessary of life for me to be constantly occupied, and Providence has added just such an amount of pressure as makes it desirable for me to do what I can" (160). Here Oliphant suggests that the circulation of her many works is the involuntary effect of her innate conformity to middle-class ideologies about the inherent value of work and its necessary instrumentalisation in the realisation of 'true' womanhood. Accordingly, she displays a helpless revulsion for idleness and a pressing need to 'do' for her children as mitigations of her overproduction of (herself through) fiction. She indicates that, while she cannot help this excessive professional expression of her natural identity (of a "womanish story-teller like [her]self" [160]), she can and will subdue its capacity to exceed conventional limits in her production of nonfiction: "In the meantime, I have a great desire to say my say once upon the subject of poetry. I shall not touch upon anybody else's ground, but I wish very much to put in my word upon the Tennysons and Dobells; and if it does not interfere with anything, would like much to follow my Art article with one on poetry"(160-61).

She defines this nonfiction periodical space that she is attempting to carve out for herself negatively: it will not impinge on already claimed intellectual and professional "ground", so it is 'not transgressing' discursive boundaries; and it is intended to "not interfere" with editorial priorities, so it is 'not threatening' to

displace any work deemed to be of superior importance. Also implicit in this proposal is a promise to make the paper a 'fit' product of a woman's pen. That is, Oliphant does not offer to produce an in-depth piece of analysis on the work of her subjects. Instead she wants only "to put in [her] word," a construction that represents her critical project as diminutive, general, and chatty, even gossipy, but certainly as 'not weighty' in physical or literary terms. Her bid for a feminised place in this masculine discursive space was successful on this occasion and the proffered article on Art completed her serialised critique of, significantly, "Modern *Light* Literature" in *BM* (my emphasis).

Clearly Oliphant's "lightly flowing stream of articles" (*A&L* 126) followed a gendered and not always unhindered course. Its very claim to a fit feminine lightness implies a concomitant vulnerability to determined limits abut the kinds and degrees of knowledge the author could be seen to possess in the public domain. In an 1861 letter to Isobel Blackwood (sister to the editors and friend to the author), she analyses the gendered limits of women's public expression:

> the men of a woman's writing are always shadowy individuals . . . and I recognise the disadvantage [of otherness] under which we all work in this respect. Sometimes we don't know sufficiently . . .; sometimes we know well enough, but dare not betray our knowledge one way or the other . . . and if one does make the study [of such forbidden subjects], one loses more than one gains. (178)

Although Oliphant speaks here of the limits of female characterisations of fictional males, she knows that her clear and serious analysis of the sexual prejudices

inherent in contemporary conventions about literary expression (her "scientific lecture") makes her vulnerable to the label of "blue-stocking" (179). Such transgressive demonstrations (betrayals of knowledge) by women emerge in Oliphant's correspondence as dangerously embodied forms of female self-expression. Though her "womanish [article] style" could circulate safely as a public representation of her private self, the "stronger fare" of serious criticism (literary or social) risked an erasure of the decorous and natural domestic veil behind which Oliphant sequestered her labouring body (171). "Blue-stocking", in Oliphant's view, was synonymous with "'platform lady'" and she expressed her fear of acquiring this label in an unpublished letter to her editor in 1876 where she begs him to "do [her] the justice to allow that nothing can be more unlike a 'platform lady'" than she is (MS 4349).[7] She receives his immediate reassurance, almost in her own words, that, indeed,

> [n]o one could probably be more unlike a 'platform lady' than you are--there is profanation in the idea--I remember a batch of them streamed into St. Andrews from Dundee and a more complete contrast to your quiet lady like manners[,] appointments and appearance could not be imagined. I would rather have printed many such stories as these [he must refer, here, to several miscellaneous articles, since the only *BM* fiction of that year, "The Secret Chamber," did not appear until December, some seven months after the date of this letter] than do anything that might possibly enlist such a pen as yours on their side. (MS 23193)

It seems clear, here, that *BM*'s editors agreed with Oliphant's association of the expression of female-forbidden knowledge with the public female body.

Despite the editor's assurances that this depreciative association could not possibly apply to her, he locates his proof in her silence and (specifically middle-class) management of her body. Even further, he demonstrates his power of determination with respect to Oliphant's production of herself (as a respectable woman and high-status professional) and his willing commitment to the social status quo that he safeguards by controlling that self's access to the market and the form of its legitimate expressions of that self. He does so by renaming her (comparatively unpolemic) critical commentaries, her "stories," thus implicitly conceding both their legitimacy as her expressive province and her own authority as woman-writer whose command of the market ("a pen such as hers") makes her a valuable (desirable) ally to the ideologically sanctified keeper of the channels. Command of the market, however, is not an unconditionally-valued and -acquired authority. Popularity was, as I will show more fully in later chapters, the "small beer" on literary accounts of professional standing, while respectability underwrote access to the market. As this editor implies, respectability is not open to all the women who "stream" into the public. The alternatives, then, as he presents them, are publicly-invisible feminine story-teller and publicly-embodied female self-speaker.

The stake for the woman who verges on the public domain thus emerges as the degree to which her body will be perceived to be immediately implicated by her self-expression. The ground upon which this determination will be made is the

conformity of the expression itself to ideologically-endorsed limits upon what women can rightfully know. Particular categories and levels of knowledge act, here, to substantiate the sex (and, possibly, the sexuality) of the speaking body in the public gaze. As was the case for Eve in Eden, the expressed possession of transgressive comprehension denies woman her 'divinely-ordained' sphere of sexual innocence, rightful authority, and moral stability. It causes her to be ejected (by a gatekeeper *par excellence*), knowingly naked, into the world at large.

From the editor's comments about preventing Oliphant's enlistment on the side of these knowing women, it seems clear that she too was thought to be capable of (and possibly tempted by) such excesses. His condescending tribute to her classed self-realisation through her "stories" suggests the idea that if Oliphant foregoes her public posture of lady-like silence (her mime of classed womanhood) in favour of an open expression of female knowing, she will also forfeit her "lightly flowing stream" of domestic production to the always potentially excessive stream itself as it moves into the policed domain of social commentary and criticism. That is, if she is seen to be expressing her self (both in terms of speaking her mind and producing a knowing, authoritative figure) in the public sphere, then she no longer has authentic resource to a domestic nature as the site and source of her self-production. Her body cannot be seen producing itself (as a (re)productive body) in public and still claim that it is safely contained within and by its naturally private self-production. Apparently the laws of Victorian

expressive physics decree that one female body cannot occupy two discrete spaces simultaneously. Oliphant may choose freely between being the protected (literary) consort in a publishing Eden of domestic decorum or the "fair game . . . 'platform lady'"at large in the world of naked knowing (MS 4349).

Oliphant's writing of her autobiography, then, is much like the undergarment needlework of her mother. It is the middle-classed domestic labour that prepares the female body it effaces for public (non)apprehension. At the same time, it both produces Oliphant's conventionalised female professional identity and reproduces her idealised middle-class domestic realm as the authorised source of her family's cultural and economic being. While such a structure of claims permitted her legitimate participation in a highly conflicted profession, it also set limits to the degree and kind of substance she could obtain in the public domain. Because of her self-production as an ordinary middle-class matron, she could not, with consistency, sustain the anomalousness of literary stardom. In fact, she could not even be seen to aspire to it. The heights of her 'interest' acceptably extended only to her family's adequate provision. Such a domesticated identity also precluded Oliphant's inclusion in the categories of literary genius and artist. Should her work have accidentally acquired these marks of individualised cultural substance, it is likely that she could have safely incorporated them into her professional identity. But that did not happen. Ironically, it may be that her self-representation was too successful. Her determined resource to a middle-class

feminine nature as the authorising well-spring of her productive labour limited her to a similarly middling status in her professional life. For Oliphant, this parallel between private values and the limits of public value indicates the mutual determinacy of her domestic and professional identities. In the next chapter I will look at her nonfiction participation in the cultural debate surrounding 'the woman question' to show her deployment of this determinacy both to legitimate/safeguard her public self-expression in mainstream periodicals and to appropriate particular modes of critical expression in that traditionally masculine field to woman's 'natural' sphere of authority and expertise.

Notes

1. She had written and published at least three novels before this one, but apparently allowed her alcoholic brother Willie to take credit. They are still attributed to him in the Library of Congress listings.

2. She saw this lifestyle as an integral part of achieving and maintaining a middle-class position of safety and respectability, but it also partook, as Meredith Townsend obliquely notes in an obituary notice of Oliphant, of the stereotype of the 'artistic' household's constant state of creative, social, and economic disruption (775).

3. These failures are the fears most often cited by opponents to women professionals and factory workers such as W. R. Greg and Eliza Linton, among many others.

4. Oliphant later refers to herself as an easily overlooked "shadow in the landscape" of literary and social duty (202), an observation which once again constructs her body, as the source of her shadow's publicly perceived configuration, as modestly withheld.

5. Alternately, Oliphant may have feared being perceived as a literary artist, a perception which would have undermined to a considerable extent the credibility of her self-construction as a commonplace little woman with an oppositional image of her as a paid public performer.

6. In her *Annals of a Publishing House*, she includes a reminiscence about her husband's career that indicates his sacrifice of his interest in and capacity to produce "higher . . . art" to the pragmatic "advantage" of commissioned work, "which . . . pa[id] at once" (2: 471). In both cases the Oliphants' choices have been between cultural and economic forms of value, with cultural value emerging as a professional luxury.

7. All bibliographic references to MS sources refer to the archives of Oliphant's correspondence lodged with the National Library of Scotland by her descendants. They are included in the NLS's holdings of Blackwood MSS. These documents remain uncatalogued and are grouped according to date (when available).

Chapter Two

"A perfectly artless art"

Of the six of Oliphant's essays on 'the woman question' that I will examine, "The Laws Concerning Women" (1856), "The Condition of Women" (1858), "The Great Unrepresented"(1866), and "The Anti-marriage League" (1896) were published under *BM's* masthead; "Mill *on the Subjection of Women*" (1869) was for the *Edinburgh Review*; and "The Grievances of Women" (1880) for *Fraser's Magazine*. Though this sample of Oliphant's papers may seem to over-represent her work for the one firm and under-represent that executed for others, it is an appropriate parallel to the dominant ratio of Oliphant's labour that was submitted to *Blackwood's* editors. In fact, the proportion of material she produced for the house over the course of her career was higher than the two-thirds I offer here.

If there were to be questions about the 'representativeness' of my selection of Oliphant's essays, they would have to query my exclusive focus here on her published participation in the debate surrounding the changing place and role of women in Victorian society. Of the three hundred or so papers she wrote in total, this group of six is the limited body of her work that discusses the subject overtly. "League" is actually a literary criticism of Hardy's *Jude, the Obscure* that I have included because in it Oliphant yokes aspects of 'the vexed question' to issues of commodification (of both the author and woman-as-subject) in cultural and literary

production. This is not to say, of course, that these essays represent Oliphant's only thoughts on this issue. Her perceptions and negotiations of it are everywhere in all genres and modes of her professional self-expression. These papers, however, allow me the opportunity to explore in this chapter the implications of the intersection of the historical, professional, and personal conditions under which Oliphant produced each essay, herself as cultural authority, and her specifically female subject as literary commodities. This approach supports Laurel Brake's contention: "aspects of production yield [the author's negotiation of] ideological meanings" (65). The controversial nature of this particular debate allows me to specify these aspects of her writing as factors in Oliphant's strategic self-production as a professional far more easily than I can do in her less 'risky' work. This is the case because, as I have shown in the last chapter, she perceived this kind of politicised self-expression as possessing the potential to individualise the woman who ascended the public platform to speak her mind at a depreciative distance from the normative middle-class ideal of womanhood. For her then, speaking to this question was especially fraught with professional peril, since her enduring viability as a prolific and well-paid contributor to the mainstream press depended to a large extent on her capacity to demonstrate her 'fit' within and 'fitness' for the patriarchal republic of letters in two senses. First, in the sense of showing how 'disinterested' she was as a professional in turning her access to and authority with the public to her own advantage as a woman. Second, in the sense

of showing her respectable moderation in an exchange within which the extremists of each side achieved both notoriety and popular support.[1]

In the case of an issue as challenging to the masculine dominance of most aspects of Victorian culture and society as 'the woman question', Oliphant's 'fit(ness)' was vitally important both to herself and to her periodical employers. For her, there would be few subjects in the public address of which she could demonstrate her classed capacity for self-denial as readily as this one. As Bourdieu explains it, "the specific logic" of woman's place in the field of cultural commentary "determines [the properties attached to class] which are valid in this market . . . and which function as capital--and, consequently, as a factor explaining practices" (113). For her employers, Oliphant's addresses allowed them the semblance of progressive liberality according to the tenets of the literary meritocracy that was, supposedly, the sole scheme of determination in the status of each of its constituents, whether male or (within limits) female.

Not surprisingly, then, in the essays that were published by the respectable and powerful house of Blackwood and by its equally important and mainstream rival, the *Edinburgh Review*, Oliphant's tone is highly conservative, though not necessarily as anti-feminist as it is perceived to have been.[2] She concludes that the need for female suffrage is not critical and she deplores the effects which feminism's fight for female independence and work opportunities exert on the family and on the public-speaking woman's vulnerability to cultural depreciation.

Mermin points out that this "ambivalen[ce] about feminism . . . [and] the less personally urgent question of the vote" was typical of many successful woman writers whos public careers were already perceived as barely "compatible with . . . womanliness" (55-56). In her essay for *Fraser's*, a periodical whose market distinction was based on the wider appeal of publishing whatever (and whoever) was perceived to be important to an individual debate, Oliphant is progressively supportive of women and their work and depicts wage-earning woman as identical in motive and value to more traditional, domestic versions of womanhood. It may be, as Trela suggests, that Oliphant "underwent . . . [an] evolution in her political and social attitiudes towards the role of women in society" in the decades between these papers (15). I will be arguing, however, that the differences between her essays are more apparent than real. In fact, all these submissions consistently demonstrate Oliphant's belief that the possibility of women's alienation from both their waged and domestic labours necessarily underwrites the realisation of family, individual, and even national identity. In order to prove that this is so, I will look beyond the seemingly contradictory nature of her conclusions and unpack the assumptions about women that she deployed to argue her points. I will show that her conclusions were often related to the conditions of their production as commodities of both cultural and material value, while the nature of her assumptions offers evidence not only of the operative ideological framework which determined the meaning and value of her life and practice, but also of the

subversive potential (in the fields of professional and social life) of one who has seemed to speak so resolutely and authoritatively for the interests of (and in service to) the traditional holders of power. In effect I will be arguing Bourdieu's point:

> if the members of [a] dominant class are more 'innovative' in domestic [issues] but more 'conservative' in the area more widely regarded as [the] political . . . order and . . . class relations . . . this is because their propensity to adopt . . . 'revolutionary' positions varies in inverse ratio with the degree to which . . . changes . . . affect the basis of their privilege. (432)

In an earlier work, I demonstrated how Oliphant works carefully throughout her fiction to uphold her culture's (and her own) limits about woman's place within the private realm. She does not challenge the idea that woman is, essentially, a domestic being whose identifying practice is simultaneously material in its fulfilling production of others' lives and necessarily effaced in its 'natural' expression of a middle-classed female self. I also showed, however, that she does challenge the restriction of 'the domestic realm' to home and hearth. That is, Oliphant suggests that under particular conditions--such as a family's need for subsistence--a 'natural' feminine aptitude for administration can be exploited beneficially in the public domain if and only if the woman's selflessness is at once the motive and the form of her materially acquisitive labour (Sanders 56). This is a relationship between women, labour, and ideology less directly described in her seemingly nonfeminist periodical essays, which take up 'the woman question' both

as a social issue and a quotidian reality; it is still discernible, as I will show, as the subversive potential of each paper's circulation.

* * *

"Laws" (1856) was written when Oliphant was twenty-eight years old and her small family was almost completely dependent on her periodical and novel income. Her husband's stained-glass workshop was failing and early symptoms of the as-yet-undiagnosed tuberculosis were beginning to suggest that his health was going to follow suit. Despite the economic pressures,[3] Oliphant recalls this as a time of halcyon domesticity and relative professional stability. She was by this time an established, if not a predictably employed, contributor to *BM* of substantial amounts of fiction and of 'light literature' criticisms and reviews. The fact that Mary Howitt, a suffrage activist and personal acquaintance of Oliphant's, sent her a copy of Bodichon's pamphlet *A Brief Summary in Plain Language of the Most Important Laws Concerning Woman Together with a Few Observations Thereon* in the hope that she would lend her support to their cause (if only in the form of her name on a petition) suggests that she was also perceived by this point in her career to be important (and perhaps anti-establishment or nonconformist) enough to merit a personal recruitment. Little did the activists know the use to which Oliphant would put the publication.

Though she admitted in a letter to Blackwood that she knew it was "unhandsome" behaviour to be so opportunistic, she used the solicitation as a

vehicle for her own first overt consideration of 'the woman question' and the activists who were making it central to valuing schemes of intellectual and ideological affiliation (MS 4119). Instead of identifying herself publicly with the culturally marginalised (and increasingly morally suspect) "'platform lad[ies],'" however much she may have professed it privately, Oliphant found a valuable opportunity to establish her 'safe' authority as a social moderate with her adamantly conservative employers, who were as politically orthodox as their cultural centrality demanded and proved they must be. In the third volume of *Annals of a Publishing House* John Blackwood's daughter, Mary Porter, reveals her father's position on this particular issue:

> He was not, as will be imagined, one of those who supported Women's Rights in the ususal acceptance of the term, and would never have approved of the pitting against each other for marketable value of the two very widely differing qualities of masculine and feminine brain-power. He considered their merits perfectly distinct and apart,--the man, in his opinion, was the stronger in every way . . . The woman, on the other hand, when she has attained distinction in any line, did so . . . *quand meme*, and admiration for her performance was undoubtedly heightened a thousandfold in his eyes by the fact that she *was* a woman, and working under disabilities which made her achievements the more creditable. (3: 159)

She goes on to illustrate the "harm [her father felt was] . . . usually done to [women's] prestige by unwise championship": "'I always find that it is really accomplished women like [Eliot and Oliphant] who are least distressed about the Rights of Women. The rights of women papers that I see are almost invariably as badly composed as doubtless their unfortunate husbands' dinners are cooked'" (3:

164). As Laurel Brake observes, Oliphant's "adopt[ion]" in "Laws" not only of "the editor's general approach and tone," but also her "pursu[it of all his] specific points" of objection, suggests her "necessar[y] . . . adherence to [the journal's] collective ethos" as an embodiment of the proprietors' values (15, 9). Thus her demonstrable "familiarity with the culture of the dominant group and [her] mastery of [its] signs and emblems of distinction" permitted her own "subtly casual distinction" as a cultural "vendor" (Bourdieu 141), the need for which indicates the occupation's still highly ambiguous value to the identity of a Victorian woman writer. The nature of the distinction Oliphant was able to achieve with her apparently self-abnegating loyalty to *BM*'s position was that of the definitively disinterested professional contender in the cultural struggle over what it might mean to be a woman in an age when home was being deployed as a metonym for England itself (as the centre of Empire) and as a metaphor for England's political structure. Such a use of 'home' at once intimated the benevolent nature of the nation's paternalistic stability and made the power-based hierarchy of relationships within the structure (both the familial and the social) available for critical analysis (Poovey 9).

Activists like Bodichon engaged with the metaphor to figure woman as the victim of this social and familial structure, whose very victimisation determined the relative identities of the powerful. Oliphant, however, denied this persecution in order to stabilise her own claims about woman's rightfully determinate power,

within the realm that she saw as the centre of all life and within the "relationship upon which all society is founded" ("Laws" 382):

> [I]t is a mere trick of words to say that the woman loses her existence, and is absorbed in her husband. . . . Mighty indeed must be the Titanic current of that soul which could receive a whole human being, full of thoughts, affections, and emotions, into its tide and yet remain uncoloured and unchanged. There is no such monster of a man, and no such nonentity of a woman, in ordinary life. Which of us does not carry our wife's likings in our heart, with the most innocent unconsciousness that they are not our own original property? And how vain is the reasoning which goes upon any other premises. (381)

Such an argument opposes the activists' rhetorical (and thus easily mutable) representation of woman's condition to the moderate's concrete apprehension of lived (and apparently eternal) experience. Oliphant's definition of marriage as "an alliance offensive and defensive against all the world" suggests an embattled domestic realm within an undifferentiated cultural outside. It is a conflict of domains in which forces of law and activism seek to transform woman in her powerful domestic substance into as legislatible an abstraction (as changeable a quantity) as man is (385):

> The laws are all in [man's] favour--he is intrenched and built about with legislation, yet is as completely at the mercy of a bad wife as a woman is at that of a bad husband. . . . For this reserved and separated territory [marriage] is beyond the reach of law-making; and the only true business of legislation in reality seems to be, either to prevent any one overleaping the barriers, or to make one distinct, bold, terrible road, by which those who cannot endure may, at peril of their lives, escape. (384)

Life, for woman, has already been determined by nature, according to Oliphant, as

the necessarily embodied production of "children--living witnesses of the individeableness of parents" from each other and from their essential identities (382). In order for woman to maintain or even claim this identity and its implied ownership of the power of physical and social reproduction, the impenetrable integrity and stability of her 'private' place of productive power must be reinforced by her constitutive absence from the public domain of civil personhood (Poovey 10): "those powers and rights [are] seated, innate and destructible, far away out of the reach of any secondary law" ("Laws" 387).

At least partly because Oliphant felt guilty about her use of the pamphlet, she was more anxious than usual that her customary anonymity be preserved (MS 4119). A short time later, she found that *BM* had made the article the leader for April's number of the magazine: "I am a little alarmed to see by the advertisements that you have given me the post of honour in this new number--I expected only to come in at the end" (MS 4119). This is rather a curious move on *BM's* part, especially in light of the fact that she had accompanied her submission with the confession of her opportunistic transformation of the recruitment effort into grist for her literary mill. Such a coincidence invites speculation about their motivation. Focussing for the moment on just the article's prominent placement, however, I would argue that it suggests the fit of Oliphant's professed views within the conservative norm upheld by the paper. Consequently such an "honour" may be understood as a demonstration of the editor's power and willingness to reward an

author's voluntary self-production in the likeness of the paper's master(ing) voice. Alternately, we might infer that the editor was offering that authorised likeness up for potential exposure as both a suborned trophy and an apostate informer who could no longer take resource from or credibly identify herself with the betrayed camp. This seems especially probable since Howitt would be likely to note the coincidence of Oliphant's knowledge of the pamphlet, the accompanying petition, and the immediate appearance of an article about them in the journal for which she was known to write.

As can be seen from my emphasis on the conditions under which "Laws" was produced, I feel that they were at least as determining, if not more so, with respect to Oliphant's professional position on the issue of legal reform, as whatever her private views on the matter may have been. I cannot say with any certainty that this essay does or does not represent her personal opinion, but it did establish for her, as it does for us, the criteria and limits of her acceptable (which is also to say paying) participation in the debate about women. As I have tried to indicate, however, her resistance to the feminists' cause of legislative reform is not anti-feminist, since she does make cautiously supportive gestures towards women's interests. Her assumptions about woman's absence of need for a constitutionalised equality in light of her vulnerable but "innate . . . powers and rights" to substantiate herself ("Laws" 387) align her views with those of the more celebrated feminists whose claims about inherent parity were being used to justify

woman's cultural and civic participation. Therefore, while her argument is extremely circumscribed in its call for female political empowerment, she does challenge the right, the power, and the capacity of civic inscription to name or narrate woman into being. According to Oliphant's essay, she has already told her domestic self. The conditions of this paper's production also indicate, however, Oliphant's negotiation of the fact that, within the public domain of Victorian cultural debate, she cannot tell it with either impunity or the consistency that underwrites legitimate authority as her (embodied) self.

* * *

When Oliphant wrote "The Condition of Women" two years later, at thirty years old, her husband's tuberculosis was well advanced, as were plans for the family of four (and another expected) to tour Italy in hopes of a climate more conducive to the improvement of Frank's health and comfort. *Blackwood's* demand for her fiction had fallen off sharply--the periodical serialised none at all that year and only a single "Christmas Tale" instalment had appeared the year before. Three novels made it into print in 1858 but none were published by her most important patrons. In her correspondence with the Blackwoods she mentions that "the usual remuneration which [they had] been in the habit of giving . . . for miscellaneous articles" was L60 (MS 4133), so the total income she derived from them in the year preceding "Condition's" publication was about L360, a speculation that both includes the fee she received for this paper and suggests the

precariousness of her dependence on the firm for steady income and regular access to the paper's market as its hired voice.

On the broader literary front, Oliphant was seeing women like Martineau, Bodichon, and Cobbe carving out places of increasing (though variously valued) authority for themselves with their acute analyses of woman's place in Victorian society. Writing on this subject was beginning to be recognised as highly marketable and, with Oliphant's own capacity to command a stable place in the literary market in serious question, it is not surprising that she would choose this time to make her second foray into such a topical conflict. Nor is it surprising that the tone and thrust of this paper closely resemble that of her first (successful) tilt at the feminists' position. The conditions for success (at least in *BM*'s market) had been established clearly by "Laws" and Oliphant in her dire need reproduces them here with the same result: her paper is afforded the confirming prestige and authority of the leading position for *BM*'s February 1858 issue.

Oliphant presents herself in "Laws" as a male who speaks of "our wives," "our heart", and "our brain" (381).[4] According to Jay it is "an acknowledgement that she had decided to place her talent in direct competition with men"(75), despite her editor's essentialised belief in the incommensurable marketability of the sexes' intellectual talents. In "Condition," however, she does not divulge any sex at all. At least part of the reason for this avoidance was, as J. Haythornthwaite observes, that at first Oliphant "perceived *Maga* as a masculine magazine and was

careful to conceal her femininity" so that her credibility and authority would not be challenged (80). In this article, she is the apparently ungendered social mediator who considers the "silken degeneration" of Civilisation, the masculine "Nemesis of the very race which has cherished him" ("Condition" 139), as he "stands at the bar to be judged by domestic juries, for offences against the social economy" (141). According to Bourdieu, most nineteenth-century thinking opposed "'Civilization,' characterized by frivolity and superficiality, [to] 'Culture,' defined by seriousness, profundity and authenticity" (174). In view of this antithesis, Oliphant's "domestic jury" may be understood to be defending culture itself, and, by extension, the middle class whose self-definition in terms of identical values appropriates it as a manifestation of its own nature. At first, the charge against Civilisation seems to be the "upsetting [of] the commonest and most universal relation of life and [the] leaving [of] a large proportion of women, in all conditions, outside of the arrangements of the family, to provide for themselves, without at the same time leaving for them anything to do" ("Condition" 141). However, these are not "universal" circumstances, but only "[s]pecial instances" upon which, the author insists, no culpability may be founded ("Condition" 141).

The universal crime of which civilisation is guilty is a construction of valued identity that has particularly alienating implications for middle-class men:

> The burden, the restraint, the limitation is true, but it is one of no partial or one-sided application; and this bondage of society, of conventional life, and of a false individual pride, bears with a more

> dismal and discouraging blight upon men, who are the natural labourers and bread-winners, than it can ever do upon women constrained by special circumstances to labour for their own bread. ("Condition" 144)

Such men, she argues, are vulnerable to vocational humiliation in a way that women are not because men, who have been shaped for the intellectual labour market (by the civilising institutions of school and culture), discover that only the more humble varieties of self-commodification and petty-commodity production--ditch-digging, tutoring, and "the miserable ranks of the penny-a-liners"--are open to them (144). That is, they are alienated from the identity nature has intended them to realise (as adequate providers for the family) by the social restrictions about the class-appropriate means of doing so. All classes of women, on the other hand, are born to fulfill a "professional position as a woman," which emerges as maternally-enforced domestic service (147). Consequently, it is only when this vocational opportunity does not present itself or when a woman is not suited to it, that she must enter the public labour market. There she will find work owing to the inherent marketability of (the enduring need for) 'natural' feminine aptitudes which are opposed in "Condition" to "ornamental" (or purely social) acquisitions (150-51).

It might be argued, with some justification, that Oliphant marginalises concerns about women's access to the labour market by constructing them as issues of marital choice which have been "misrepresent[ed]" to women in books

"with [only] a show of authority, and an appearance of wisdom," books which women have passively consumed ("Condition" 150). Because the emphasis here is on the books' surface qualities, (or quality of surfaceness), it seems clear that she intends them to be perceived as the products of Civilisation rather than of 'true' culture with its links to a shared and classed interiority. Her fear is that the consumption of such commodities will reproduce the reader with the products' surfacing tendencies towards distinction:

> What is likely to be the natural product of such teaching? A woman perpetually self-conscious, no longer a spontaneous human creature, but a representative of her own sex . . . fancying that she has found out a new condition, and a new development of femininity, . . . fancying, if she does not marry, that it is because her views are higher and her principles more elevated than those of the vulgar people who do; and that, looking over their heads, she is able to see how unfit they are for the relations which she herself will not accept. (150)

According to Mermin, this formulation is a fairly standard evocation of the Victorians' ideological requirement that "woman's virtue [be] marked by her unself-consciousness, her unawareness of her sexual body" (128).

Consequently, if a woman accepts the "anomalous and unnatural" exemption from the dictates of her nature offered in subversive literature as the conditions for her most valuable self-realisation, then by definition she will preclude her identifying resource to the normative middle class: "in reality all the great rules must primarily apply, if there is any truth to them, . . . [to] all the throngs of middle life" ("Condition" 149). This "reality," as Oliphant describes

and claims it in the voice of "ordinary sense and wisdom" ("Condition" 147), "oblige[s her] to confess" that all women are 'always already' in "economical participation in domestic" operations ("Condition" 149). Commodified civilisation, then, encourages woman to refuse this privatised labour market in favour of a public one where she is reduced in her difference to disadvantaged competition with labourers of superior utility: "The real drawback is, that while the rough work of nature always remains . . . ready for those who will work at it, delicate labour for delicate hands is not capable of more than a certain degree of extension" ("Condition"146). Ultimately, the marketing of woman-as-commodity-subject produces in consuming women a culpable awareness of their body's capacity to be (likewise) distinctively commodified. Such a tacitly expressed desire for singularity refuses the "concern to pass unnoticed" which Bourdieu says has long "guide[d]" the middle class's identifying practices (350).

The interests of a particularly devalued literary market are served, here, in "a process of [inevitable] debasement" for both essential womanhood[5] and the truth-speaking type of critical practice that Oliphant presents here as grounded in objectivity, reality, and nature rather than in self-interest (the masculine market-place of penny-a-liners), theory, or the conflicted determinations of social convention ("Condition" 154). As a recourse, she offers the common middle-class property of "higher literature" which treats "[a]ll the greater questions of existence" (153). Unlike the market-oriented productions of civilisation, which

operates externally according to "[i]nevitable . . . rules of necessity and self-interest [to] sway the whole social economy" (146), this other literature acts inwardly "to the benefit of the race" by laying down "the law of Heaven" (154, 153). For Oliphant this law is always also that of nature which she claims, here, is "life in its truest sense, and experience of all those greatest incidents and events" (153). Although she cites "the Gospel" in this particular example of literature's most positive productive potential, she has already included the novels of such women as "Miss Austin [sic], Miss Edgeworth, and Miss Ferrier" as acceptable means of "instructi[ng] womankind in general" (147-48). In their own persons and their works they model "respectable and respected" possibilities for the realisation of female identity, whether it is to be negotiated within a public or private market (148). Oliphant does not remark upon the labour implied by the fact of these works (the externalising sign of their production). She notes only the internal effect of their circulation which is also the reproduction of woman's nature, through consumption, in likeness to that of other female consumers. Bearing Bourdieu's antithesis in mind, this construction effectively admits such 'woman's work' to the valued category of literature that beneficially produces culture as "the home of British purity" (153). This is not a tacit incursion into the masculine domain of "higher literature," but an explicit appropriation of some portion of its determining power to women, to whom "the literature . . . belong[s] as fully and freely as . . . to men" (153).

* * *

Eight years later, we find Oliphant arguing much the same case about the condition of women in her *BM* piece "The Great Unrepresented," although it must be noted that J. S. Mill's support of the female franchise is the primary means of access to this issue, rather than the labour market. This time, Oliphant opens her article with a clear self-declaration--"The present writer has the [not unmitigated] disadvantage of being a woman" (367)--and follows with an identification of herself as a "female householder, [a] lone wom[a]n" taxpayer and solitary domestic administrator who is not "in possession of a [civil] representative" of her own "in the person of a husband" ("Unrepresented" 369). She is one of the female number who is "respectable, but not charming; whose hair is growing gray . . . who inspire[s] esteem or awe, and not any softer sentiment" and who, by virtue of a lack of ability or desire to secure a male partner to represent her in the public domain, "stand[s] apart before the world, almost--horrible thought! as if we were men" (370). Such a declaration of class, sex, age, and (feminine) marketability engages the conditions of this paper's production as the foundation of the position it argues.

By 1866, when Oliphant wrote this piece, she was thirty-eight years old, a widow of seven years, and recently bereaved of her much-beloved oldest child and only daughter, Maggie. She found comfort throughout her mourning in the deep and enduring friendship she had formed four years earlier with Jane Carlyle, wife

of Thomas, whom she had originally contacted to consult about Jane's childhood tutor, the late religious philosopher Edward Irving, before writing his biography. Oliphant was always in awe of the Carlyles, whose cultural status was very high.[6] On the occasion of the Irving biography, Jane wrote to tell her

> what Mr C. thinks, which is much more to the purpose [than what *I* think of your book]! I never heard him praise a *woman's* book, hardly any man's, as cordially as he praises this of yours! You are "worth whole cartloads of Mulochs, and Brontes, and THINGS of that sort." "You are full of geniality and genius even"! "Nothing has so taken him by the heart for years as this biography"! You are really "a fine, clear, loyal, sympathetic female being." (emphases in original) (*A&L* 186-87)

Though condescending and even misogynistic in tone, Carlyle's high praise for Oliphant's first nonfiction book, with its implied acknowledgement of her success in carving out a culturally important and 'authentically' feminine place and mode of professional self-realisation, was very encouraging to her. By 1866, however, Oliphant's potential for genius remained unrecognised by her employers. It was the year in which both the serialisation and book form release of *Miss Marjoribanks*[7] were overshadowed by *Blackwood's* relatively extravagant promotion and proud publication of its 'star' author's latest work--George Eliot's *Felix Holt.* In her own words, she had become "by this time a sort of general utility woman in the Magazine" (*APH* 2: 475). Jay says this use of "a domestic figure of speech . . . contain[s] the glories of her achievement within the permissable bounds of lowly female employment" (15). I would add that the label

also simultaneously denies the professional and literary singularity of which Carlyle said she was capable (and upon the possession of which Eliot's preferential treatment by the House of Blackwood was justified) and continues to claim the field of miscellaneous article writing as her authorised, appropriate, and even defining domain. It is "a distinctive mark . . . consist[ing] in the absence of any mark," a strategy which Bourdieu says is most necessary "when the intention of distinguishing oneself . . . is held to be 'excessive" (227). Since Oliphant herself establishes that negative criterion for female value in her essay, her claim against distinction is essential. That is, her authority is primarily derived from her constitutively feminine absence from the specialised discursive fields within which expertise substantiates professional individualisation and personal (perhaps even ideologically challenging) difference at the level of public apprehension.

It is precisely this authority of essentialised sex that Oliphant deploys in "Unrepresented" to refute Mill's admittedly persuasive expertise. She is first and foremost an ordinary woman, the feminine voice of "the exigencies of practical necessities," who confronts Mill and his "twenty . . . bold" bearers of the "maiden standard," "the army of logic in an unreasonable practical world" ("Unrepresented" 368-69). Her opposition of Mill's theory to her practice, also sets his "conception" against her necessary "execution" (Bourdieu 387). The binary seeks to create a hierarchy which "deauthorises" technical proficiency in favour of "nature, so that social value comes to be [underwritten and] identified

with 'personal' value" (Bourdieu 387). In this way Oliphant claims a superior authority to address this political (i.e. masculine) issue. Thus her refusal of the need for enfranchisement not only takes note of the valuing association of her professional self-expression with her classed self-construction, but it also avoids the danger of being perceived to wield this authority with a transgressive intent:

> It is the hot-headed young women who would like to be of a little more importance in the world, and who envy a man's privileges of going where he likes and doing what he likes, and are foolish enough to think that with this freedom and their own powers they could do everything, who make ridiculous claims on our behalf on the pity of the world. ("Unrepresented" 371)

Agitating for the vote, here, is a public gesture of ambition for female civic substance that undermines the essentialised authority of the respectable woman of letters: "The logic of the argument is such that even we, the blessed recipients of the boon, are silenced. . . . [It is] a mode of promotion which strikes us dumb" ("Unrepresented" 371).

According to Oliphant, being given the vote by the abstract logic of Mill, though intended as "compensation" for being "not as other women, cared for and ministered to" ("Unrepresented" 370), actually effaces sex so that women become vulnerable to superseding "jurisdictions" of identificatory authority, like law, economics, and class (Poovey 73), and must surrender their transcendently "distinctive character as women" ("Unrepresented" 372):

> The class in society which the real female householder resembles most is that of the real male householder . . . When this animal is a

> small tradesman, and of a limited order of intelligence, he is very apt to be political; but everybody who has any practical knowledge must know that the farther one ascends the social scale the less importance generally does the possessor of the franchise give to his vote.
> ("Unrepresented" 373)

Within Oliphant's argument, woman's apparently free-ranging mobility and already "considerable" influence over public opinion would be lost if she were to emerge from her "domestic empire, and descend to the poll with the greengrocer" ("Unrepresented" 373-74). Such an ambitious descent will "hoist" her "up on an artificial platform" to spectacularise her as a public political contender, "deck[ed] . . . out" in "war-paint and feathers ("Unrepresented" 374). Her evocation of "women . . . who put themselves literally on display" bears out Mermin's point about female ambition implicating the body of the female aspirant (17). The imagery here takes woman from the heights of a demure empress, to the market streets of hawkers and tradesmen, to the public platform of alienated competition. Upon this public eminence, her body bears the marks of her marketed ambition for a transgressively masculine form of self-individualisation. Mermin adds that this "imagin[ing] the realization of ambition as self-exposure" was a "characteristic . . . way to turn fears about writing to the service of writing itself" by appearing to "shun the gaze," or to repudiate self-fulness (xiv).

In keeping with Mermin's observation, I must note that by the time Oliphant makes her claims about the "domestic empire" as woman's rightful seat of authority, she includes her professional "inscribing [of] our opinion in the pages

of Maga" as an unproblematic "honour" to which she has been "admitted" so that she may express domesticated truths ("Unrepresented" 367). Her distinction between the authenticating potential of the sites in which divergently valued forms of womanliness can be self-expressed rules out the possibility that she is an anomalous and vulnerable public figure (Poovey 6). Such a differentiation acts to distance her from the abnormality and 'unwomanly nature' of "the curious assemblage of detached women who choose to present themselves before the world as representatives of their sex" ("Unrepresented" 376). The criterion for her difference from this group is implicit in the fact that "she has [not] give[n] up her own existence" in order to exercise her capacity for public speech and, thus, has not defeated "God's purpose . . . in her" ("Unrepresented" 376). Throughout this paper Oliphant relies on her sex and not her occupation as the primary category of self-identification (in contrast to the debased penny-a-liners and writers of wisdom-books in "Condition" with their commodification of woman for profit) (Linda Peterson 166). Given her view, however, that the necessary bestowal upon woman of man's traditional privileges reduces her to a near-man and to being "of no more use than if she were a man," the distance between herself (as a writer within public knowledge) and these "exceptional women" becomes difficult to comprehend ("Unrepresented" 376, 379). It is a contradiction that she may be trying to defuse when she self-consciously presents herself "in her own person" as pure voice, "speak[ing] for the mass [of women], which is not exceptional" and

rejecting the official and public embodiment that enfranchisement represents ("Unrepresented" 379). Her assertion of indifference establishes what Bourdieu calls a "relationsip of distant proximity" to the group of women she exposes "making a spectacle of itself" so that she may lay claim to a "higher class distinction" as the basis of her authority (58). Such a tacit "ascen[t of] the social scale" leaves the concern for enfranchisement to a definitively 'declassed' category of woman (Bourdieu 373).

Within the terms of her self-representation, which refer to conventionalised narratives of women's lives and purposes, Oliphant is all woman, despite (or, as the next section will show, because of) her confessed departure from the status of desired object. Her authority to speak to Mill's proposals for feminine enfranchisement is, thus, twofold: she is the *femme sole* who, according to Mill's argument as she interprets it, is most lacking a civic voice and she is the exemplary self-sacrificing middle-class woman whose refusal of voting privileges marks out her 'natural' self-denial as the very desirable professional attribute of disinterestedness. Such a feminine self-construction participates in the values decreed by the Victorian ideal of the self-made professional man without taking the final step into full professional self-realisation (as a viable competitor who needs no permission for admittance) that marks merited 'arrival' for Oliphant's many male counterparts (Poovey 106).

* * *

In 1869, when Mill's *Subjection of Women* was published, a desire for the author to be "scourged" for his radical ideas about political reform issued from the *Blackwood's* editorial office (*APH* 3: 164)[8]. Perhaps in response to this literary 'hit order', Oliphant produced another paper critical of Mill's ideas and methods, but the journal did not print it. Oliphant's career at this point was at it height and a refusal from *BM* no longer spelled economic disaster since her work was being accepted and even sought by other periodicals and publishers. This particular essay appeared in the October number of the quarterly *Edinburgh Review*, one of *BM*'s most enduring and often bitter rivals. It seems likely, however, that *BM* had first option on this essay and then it was sent around to others, as was Oliphant's practice with much of her fiction, so that its appearance under this competitor's masthead probably raised no issues of disloyalty. According to the capitalist principles dominating the nineteenth century's literary market place, the producer of petty commodities--such as miscellaneous articles--was free to broker her anonymous wares with the definitively entrepreneurial goal of finding the most capital-rich niche for the product in both the senses of economic and professional advantage.[9] For this reason, Oliphant's appearance in the pages of *ER* would have been seen as no more than the market-based concatenation of buyer, seller, mutual need (Oliphant needed money and a prestige outlet and the journal needed a particularly-configured product), and opportunity (to supply to the expansion of all parties including the market in which the product demand is at once created and

fulfilled).

In Oliphant's 1866 correspondence about the previous article on what she referred to as Mill's "mad notion of the franchise for women," she had expressed a concern that Blackwood might feel she was "too respectful" of the reformer (*A&L* 211). She also warned that "I can't for my part find any satisfaction in simply jeering at a man who may do a foolish thing in his life but yet is a great philosopher". Since "Unrepresented" is very similar in tone and content to "Mill *on the Subjection of Women*", it is possible that her fears about the editorially perceived inadequacy of her moderate rejection of Mill's defence of female suffrage were realised.[10]

As in the previous essay, Oliphant tries here to negotiate a middle ground, resisting the "picturesque and sentimental pleas which tempt the advocates on both sides" of the debate ("Mill" 574). This 'middling' neutrality is reinforced by her refusal to specify her sex. Her argument, thus, does not rest on a clear declaration of who or what she is, but on her capacity to muster a credible opposition to Mill's (culturally-endorsed) authority as both a professional rhetorician and as a philosopher. His acknowledged expertise is precisely the determination of the definitions and implications of social and individual being that Oliphant intends to challenge with this paper. I will show that in "Mill" the credibility of Oliphant's resistance is underpinned by an authority that she produces in her argument as essentially feminine, but of even more stable a cultural substance than that

manifested by Mill in his high status as producer of philosophical and political discourse. On the one hand, her authority acquires its weight from the traditional notions about women anchoring her subtly subversive argument within a discursive field about the changing implications of social and sexual relational structures. On the other hand, that authority draws upon the material basis of the capitalist logic that she deploys to point out the abstract nature (to be understood as the impractical and ephemeral nature) of Mill's challenge to the civil status quo.

In "Mill" Oliphant refers many times to what she calls "the fundamental" aspects of both Mill's address of "the claims of women" and her own (572). According to her, Mill has treated the "fundamental principles" of the issue, unlike other "apologists of women," with his creation of a woman's history that begins with Eve (572). His version, she says, takes account (however "strangely fictitious" the conditions in that account) of the fact that woman, like man, is born to a working, and not just an ideologically symbolic, role. While she applauds Mill's return to "the fountainhead" (572), she laments his subsequent lapse into the "picturesque and sentimental" (574). It is a retreat which must "shake our confidence [even] in such an authority as Mr Mill" because it leads " to no higher ground . . . than that limited [and limiting] arena of equality upon which so many futile duels have been fought" (577-78).

Mill's evocation of 'equality', for Oliphant, in conjunction with the idea of woman's work, opens the discussion of sexual and social relations to the

"fundamental question--which we may call that of the official superiority of man in the economy of the world" (578), or, in other words, to the capitalist principle of free competition in the market place, including the labour market. By the mid-nineteenth century exploitation of this very market had become central to the moneyed middle classes' maintenance of their ascendant potential for social and cultural mobility. Oliphant states that at the level of the attributed individual "all . . . the boldest theoriser [can] ever dream of asserting is that [woman] is equal with [man] in [intellect], while she is manifestly not equal to him in bodily strength" (582).

Bodily constitution and physical capabilities determine the roles the sexes will occupy (or by which they will be occupied) in "the natural conditions of existence" and it is the male's "superior" physicality--in both the senses of strength and capacity to "face the outside world . . . without intermission"--that marks him out for necessary capture by the market through the defining commodification of his body ("Mill" 583). In contrast to the 'naturally' public trajectory of a man's embodiedness, woman's "compels her to intervals of seclusion and avoidance of the world's gaze" (583-84). The necessary interiority of her "sancti[fied] . . . weakness" obligates woman to meet the returning provider "with offices of services, with domestic ministrations, with grateful lessening of herself and magnifying of him" (584). Once again, Oliphant's touchstone of "reality and seriousness"emerges as the actual conditions of capitalist production

(581). These conditions stipulate that the ability to command economic resources or those of property rightfully determine the distribution of power and status, as well as the direction of a hierarchically-situating flow of service. She goes on to say that,

> So natural is this, that when, as the case may be, it is a woman who is the bread-winner for a household of women, the worker is turned into an impromptu superior on the spot, and served and waited on as the man in other circumstances is waited on and served. It is the hire of the labourer, the reward of the provider; an instinctive law which antedates all legislation, and lies at the very root and beginning of all human affairs. (585)

Here the privatised body of the domestic labourer is both the material foundation and signifying evidence of the family's achievement of a stable economic and social identity that is also a reproduction of the capitalist conditions determining the distribution of power at a national level. Usually, however, "the economical position . . . of the superior, the first in the natural hierarchy" is man's to produce before the world, while the domesticated body of woman 'naturally' produces both a real and symbolic value invisibly within the confines of her 'rightful' domain. According to Oliphant, the female body, in its naturally productive mode, has no appropriate or necessary access to the public domain of civic being where the representation of privately-possessed (material) resources (as in the case of the economic criterion for enfranchisement and demonstrable class affiliation, including the at-home presence of the reproductive female body) suffices to negotiate identity. In this scheme, the actual and practical

(re)production of capitalism, its relations, and its practitioners--"th[e] infallible law" according to which society is organised--is the province of the "women who have framed it" with their maternal bodies ("Mill" 585). In contrast, the abstract(ed) public domain of political determination (the theorisation of actual social and civil relations) remains to men like Mill who are prepared by their class-specific training for the capitalist ideal of free competition for dominance in the (cultural and economic) market place.

Though Oliphant says that if a woman is a family's provider, she is as entitled to receive the symbolic submission of domestic service as her husband would be when he "went out alone to labour, and she . . . stayed at home" ("Mill" 584), she is still not able to compete freely because of the 'natural' and authenticating productive differences between her body and those of the males against whom she sets herself in the labour market. "[T]he distinguishing work of women," or maternity, "this essential element of her life at once and forever disables a woman from all trial of strength and rude equality with man" (586). Jay says that Oliphant "escape[s] the bonds of essentialism" here by "acknowledging . . . an ideal, rather than in claiming . . . [a] norm" (49), but I would argue that she revises the limits of woman's nature rather than rejecting them. From statements like the previous one, it seems clear that Oliphant believes woman's sex and her active sexuality will preclude permanent and stable economic provision. This is so because her 'nature' must realise itself in a mode of production that both precedes

and supersedes the labour market, though it also, eventually, supplies that market with the commodifiable basis of its own (and society's) perpetuation: labourers. The stability of a woman as a professional and, further, as a cultural determinant is only possible when she is not sexually active, or in Oliphant's argument, not potentially self-productive within the private domain:

> Our old scruples and precautions are simply unmeaning to [celibate women], not because of any unwomanliness on their part, but because they have passed the age at which one set of scruples operate, and have kept themselves free from those engagements which promote another. . . . They are as strong, as courageous, as clever as their masculine contemporaries. They have no occasion to hide themselves, no mystery going on within them which shrinks from the eye of day. Their lives stretch on clear before them like those of men, unhampered by any of the usual feminine burdens. In short, they are quite able to stand up and try their strength against the first-comer. And if we are to be asked why should not they? . . . Why not if they like it, is all the faltering response we can make. We might jeer at their boldness, but that is a cheap and not very telling argument. We might thunder against their unwomanliness and beat them back to the level of their sex, but that would be futile, and it would be foolish. They are quite able to judge for themselves, and we have no right to beat them back. If they like it why should they not have votes? Their position is exceptional, and so it is quite possible may be their rights. ("Mill" 591-92)

This new type of woman, the celibate (and clearly mature) female market competitor, can find as self-realising a niche in "a learned profession or some department of public life" as an educated man ("Mill" 592). With the provision that her body continues to be withheld from maternal self-expression, the celibate woman may subject herself to the principles of capitalism and achieve classed identity and value through the public and professional commodification of her

labour:

> If she likes it, the chances are that she would be of admirable use in many practical matters, and could work upon committees, and manage poor-laws, and education, and reformatory movements, and boards of works, and all the benevolent-political work of the country, as well as any set of men. She is as she declares herself to be, a force unemployed, a capacity going to waste, and if she chooses to enforce and insist upon her rights, we cannot see what reasonable argument can be brought against her: nor have we any doubt that she will obtain them in the long run, if she perseveres; and she is sure to persevere. (592)

According to this very middle-class invocation of the obligation to realise the inherent value of utility, before which Oliphant appears to be helplessly persuaded to mitigate the constraints of traditional notions about women, the material resource(fulness) that is woman's essence is inexcusably wasted if its occupant does not find a market for its productivity. Such an identificatory alternative for woman, however, still looks to the public absence of her female body for a negative expression of alignment with the middle-class values that have been invoked to justify the circulation of her commodified labour and its products. Unlike a man, who is fully and naturally realised through his inevitable and necessary capture by the market place (the occupational self-expression of a man with dependents to support, who daily exchanges his body for their subsistence and his own consequent identification as a man of real social substance), a woman must displace the sexual identification of herself--the embodied expression of her essential nature--with her capacity to labour usefully and to compete freely. Her

body (as the sign of her difference and disqualification for professional parity) must remain exempt from the process of commodification that will, nonetheless, substantiate the value of her productivity through beneficial consumption.

By the classed definition of essential female being, then, only her capacity for labour and its products may become available to the market because her body remains uncompromisably contained by and within her private nature. It may be argued that Oliphant is anti-feminist here, with her apparent invocation of the biological determinism inherent in the much-touted Victorian doctrine of separate sexual spheres of valued self-realisation. But I must point out that the only self-sufficient and exclusively-occupied sphere of identifying labour is the 'confinement' of maternity that "separates [woman] and her work and her office from the office and work of man" ("Mill" 586). That is, anyone capable and qualified may compete for a place of value in the public domain of waged labour, but no aspect of that external existence (including the cultural production of reform legislation) can (re)determine the 'always already' fixed nature of woman's withheld body. This remains so as long as woman does not materialise her body (through its emergence as an individualised commodity) in her professional competition for a share of the market.

The logic that informs Oliphant's argument for the acceptable public self-realisation of new types of 'true' womanhood is reminiscent of the negative criterion used in the determination of the degree of possessed manhood: the more

suppression is evident, the more essential identity is available to be claimed. In the case of the woman of the professional middle class, this formula implies that the more of her embodied self she can displace from the public process of commodification with disinterested labour (that materially-productive labour which does not serve her interests as an individual, but only those of society or her needy dependents), the more she can continue to take identifying resource from (sanctuary within) essential womanliness. The resource for woman's valued identification, here, whether at a professional or personal level, is always from the realm of the private and embodied to that of the public and abstract. Oliphant plots this trajectory of authorised self-expression, in conjunction with her evident, because participatory, command of the capitalist market conditions in which she and Mill produce themselves and each other as paid cultural competitors, when she claims the authority to answer Mill's argument. Early in "Mill" she says,

> It is hard to recognise [the perpetuated masculine conspiracy of mastery over slave] when we turn from the gloomy image conjured up in the philosopher's study to the fresh daylight outside [where "the fumes of the tale disperse and float away into the common daylight"]. . . . There are subjects upon which such a writer [as Mill] speaks with authority which is all but supreme. We do not yield our judgment to him, yet his word has a weight which attaches to the utterance of few of his contemporaries. But this is not one of those special subjects. This is a matter on which we are all qualified to form an opinion. What we see and know has inevitably a greater influence with us than what we are told, and common experience, common eyesight, contradict Mr. Mill's picture at every turn. Was it not unwise at the very outset of a philosophical inquiry to put himself in sharp collision with the evident and visible? It is not a proof, perhaps, that his theory is wrong, but it is a proof that his

> judgment is sometimes warped by theory, and that he does not approach this subject at least with the candour and impartiality which become a great thinker. (577)

Her authority refuses to partake of Mill's abstract emotional appeal about the potential degradation for women inherent in political constructions of them without rights or even self-sufficient being. Instead she speaks with "the profoundest sense of reality" (581). Reality, here, is the quotidian negotiation in "common daylight" of lived relationships (577). In Bourdieu's terms it is a "privileging [of] the private and intimate" which not only legitimates the public expression of her personal opinion (415-16), but also makes her "inevitably appear as the guardian . . . of bourgeois morality" (423). As a woman and a professional novelist (though both facts remain unstated in the paper), this relational aspect of day-to-day reality is particularly within Oliphant's province. Her twice-repeated reference to the authorising clarity of her "daylight" perspective also associates her paid production of this essay, as a cultural commodity, with the disinterested competition that she has shown to be acceptable (and even beneficial) when taken up by women "who have . . . no mystery going on within them which shrinks from the eye of day" ("Mill" 591). Although Oliphant claims no sex--only hinting that she has "a conviction . . . we speak with a fuller knowledge of the feeling of women, who are the parties most concerned" ("Mill" 581)--her anonymous self-expression takes authoritative and identifying resource from the domain of the quotidian concrete. According to the ideologically conformable limits of gendered

expertise that she selectively fortifies or undermines, this resource is essentially feminine, unchallengeably real, and "inevitably [of] greater influence" in the determination of valued being. Such a basis for her authority also bears great weight in her implicit justification of her own (suggestively feminine) critical labour in the public domain of this (decidedly masculine) political debate.

* * *

1880, the year in which "The Grievances of Women" appeared in *Fraser's Magazine*, was not a stellar period in either the author's career or her private life. At both levels Oliphant was hemmed in by men who were limiting, appropriating, or rejecting her authority to determine the circulation and value of her self-expression.[11] Her "exasperation" about the alienating ascendancy of men in these spheres of her self-production may have motivated the writing of "Grievances" (699), but it most certainly emerges in the paper as none-too-subtle reminders to her male challengers of her own access to power. Though she may not be able to (re)name them, she can at least (re)interpret them as subverters of the ideological foundations of Victorian society itself: the merited and beneficial triumph of the truly good over their oppressors and the right of the productive to receive full (moral and economic) credit for their industry. On the first page of this essay she says that "the newspapers have us in their power, and are able to quash the honest opinion of a great many women whose views on the subject might be worth knowing perhaps, being the outcome of experience and average good sense, if no

more. It is a disagreeable effort even to write on the subject for this very reason," and, on the second page,

> I am almost sure that we, women in general, would have preferred that the subject should never have been mooted at all, even when we felt it of the profoundest personal importance, rather than subject ourselves and our position, rights and wrongs and supposed weaknesses, and our character altogether, to discussion before our children and our dependents. It is not pleasant for a woman with sons, for instance, to feel that they who owe her obedience and respect, are turned into a laughing tribunal, before which her supposed pranks are to be exhibited and her fundamental imperfections set forth. (698, 699)

In "Grievances", then, Oliphant makes what has since been perceived to be her first self-declaration in favour of the feminist movement, but the clarity of her intent and her signature are the only real innovations. Her argument remains grounded in the capitalist philosophy that has authorised her participation in and interpretations of the cultural determination of 'rightful' value, significance, and the limits of the possibilities for self-realisation. As the two previous citations indicate, she also returns in this paper to the idea of the woman's managed body (the silenced professional woman and the speechless, spectacularised mother) as the essential and necessarily alienated material basis of society's reproduction of itself. Thus, her resource for the authority to speak publicly emerges once again as a highly feminised comprehension of her own embodiment, as a woman, of alienable and (de)valuable productive potential.

In "Grievances", Oliphant is more precise about who she is than in any

other essay I have considered so far. Not only does she identify herself as a female voice "expressing some of the opinions of quiet and otherwise voiceless women, with as much dislike to platforms as their grandmothers" ("Grievances" 698), but she also claims this piece with her distinctive and well-known initials, M. O. W. O. Thus, while she continues to distinguish herself--as the 'pure voice' cultural participant of the previous essays--from the embodied platform speaker who physically contends in the public domain of cultural conflict, the very personal style and tone marks this voice's difference from that of Oliphant's other periodical work. Although it would be unwise to draw any hard and fast conclusions about the superior 'truth-value' of this more personal address with respect to Oliphant's 'real' feelings (particularly since signature was a policy of *Fraser's* by the 1880s), I can at least speculate that the values and opinions Oliphant expresses in her own name are those which she wishes to associate herself with and to support with the cultural authority her name possesses (Haythornthwaite 80). It is, perhaps, because she was popularly known as a writer of domestic novels (long-accepted as forums for the feminine exploration of quotidian subjectivity) that she felt it appropriate to enter the enfranchisement fray on the feminine ground of 'sentiment,' an aspect of human (emotional) life for which her fictional realism was most celebrated (Loban 162). It also seems appropriate to conjecture that it is because of her claimed authorship that Oliphant's views in "Grievances" are most consistent with those in her claimed

fiction. That is, her 'popular' authorial identity would have been extremely important as a guarantor to readers of a particular ideological representation and as a market sign in the commodification of that position.

For my purposes here, the most noteworthy similarities between Oliphant's fiction and "Grievances" are her explicit connection of domestic labour to the publicly apprehended creation of economic and social status and the vulnerability of that labourer to the alienation inherent in the capitalist system that she reproduces despite her exclusion from its full benefit on the basis of her effaceable materiality:

> The same rule exists everywhere. Among shopkeepers of all but the highest class, the wife, in addition to her natural work [maternity and housekeeping], takes her share in the business, and such is the case in a great many occupations. . . .[I]n one way or another she overflows from her own share of the work into his. . . . She it is who must take it in hand, to secure as much as can be had of comfort and modest luxury and beauty, out of the poor blank sum of money, which in itself is barren of all grace. . . . Housekeeping is a fine science . . . and in general it is a hard struggle to carry on that smooth and seemingly easy routine of existence which seen outside appears to go of itself. . . . Thus a woman has not only parallelled labours in her life to which the man can produce no balance on his side, . . .[b]ut for this she gets absolutely no credit at all. ("Grievances" 703-04)

Within "Grievances" the domestic domain is the private site in which the physical feminine production of an economically-conventionalized social narrative takes place. This narrative gains social authority precisely at the point at which the complete erasure of the labouring female body occurs, or, in other words, precisely

at the point at which her body eludes the commodification of the public labour market. In light of this construction, Oliphant's repeated 'fact of existence' (to the effect that woman gets no credit for her large share in the production of the family's identity and subsistence [Jay 6] or that she is alienated from her material and self-realising production), becomes the necessary condition for the public circulation of her family's social substance, or, if she is a professional like Oliphant, the necessary condition for the cultural and economic increase of whoever takes control of the product and circulates it in the reproduction of (corporate) identity and value. According to the personal and professional conditions under which Oliphant produced this essay, then, the labour relations of the middle-class home become particularly like those of the literary profession. In both cases, a collectively upheld economic unit tells a particularly-configured narrative of respectability (or ideological affiliation) and all domestic labour (which, as Jay confirms, includes writing [42]) is the (de)valuable, alienable, and effaceably material foundation of social and national relations.

The logic of this argument leads Oliphant to the "homely ground" from which she must (in the name of consistency) assert her "sentiment[al]" right to, if not her certain desire for, a voice in the civil life which her domestic occupation underwrites ("Grievances" 710):

> Some of us . . . have been put down from the eminence of married life summarily, and by no fault of ours. We have been obliged to bear all the burdens of a citizen upon our shoulders, to bring up

> children for the State, and make shift to perform alone almost all the duties which our married neighbours share between them. And to reward us for this unusual strain of exertion, we are left out altogether in every calculation. We are the only individuals in the country (or soon will be [with the pending advent of universal male enfranchisement]) entirely unrepresented, left without any means of expressing our opinions on those measures which will shape, probably, the fate of our children. This seems to me ridiculous--not so much a wrong as an absurdity. ("Grievances" 709)

For Oliphant, then, the issue of female suffrage becomes one of woman's right to a public voice that can participate in the determination of each domestic narrative's denouement ("the fate of our children"). By construing this issue as one of maternity (which becomes metononymic for the whole range of woman's material, domesticated, and alienable productivity) and sentiment (which becomes the safely externalisable sign of a truly middle-class feminine nature), rather than one of justice (with its attendant requisites for the masculine attributes of philosophical logic and abstract reasoning), she takes up the same type of domesticated authority that we have seen her wield against Mill in both of the previous essays. As Diedre David points out, her resource to sentiment authorises her as an accomplished woman of letters and prevents her from being seen as transgressively rational (3).

These resources also emerge in Oliphant's work as a particularly feminised heritage of alienated identity and labour and as an essentialised expertise in the specification of relational dynamics and implications:

> When I say sentimental it is not in any ludicrous sense that I use the word. Any actual injury is trifling in comparison with an injurious

> sentiment, which pervades and runs through life. . . . It has been handed down to us from our mothers, it descends from us to our daughters. We know that we have a great many things to suffer, from which our partners in the work of life are exempt, and we know also that neither for these extra pangs do we receive sympathy, nor for our work do we receive the credit which is our due. ("Grievances" 700)

Her equivocation with respect to her desire to exercise the "political privilege" of speaking as a civil representative of her private labour suggests that, in spite of her argument, she still perceived agitation for the vote as a form of female self-assertion that could compromise the (classed) respectability of her already-public self-production with a revelation of the interested female body whose realising labour causes it to verge perpetually on the public domain of (literary) culture and politics (710). Accordingly, she self-denigratingly turns the logic of enfranchisement back on itself to ask, not for the vote, but for an exemption "from the payment of those rates which qualify every gaping clown to exercise the franchise" (710). This manoeuvre reduces the alternatives to two: the first she appears not to like or need and the other an impossibility. Thus, the franchise, when it comes (and Oliphant 'feels' that it must), will not have been the project of her (interested) labour. Instead it will be only the inevitable materialisation of the feminine sentiment that she rightfully and acceptably commodifies with this essay. In this way, Oliphant can be seen to have chosen (an important position given her consistent construction of woman as an autonomous social and personal agent) to maintain her status as the bodiless representative voice of the respectable (but

feeling) voiceless and as an economically viable (though invisible) narrator of her own social authority.

* * *

Oliphant was sixty-eight years old in 1896, the year she wrote "The Anti-marriage League" for *BM*. Although her popular eminence had long since begun to decline, as had her health, she was still contributing an article nearly every month to her primary employers; *Longman's Magazine* was publishing a fiction serial that ended in May of 1896 (the book form of which had been solicited and published in the US in 1895); and the *New Review* accepted at least one biographical piece from her about her late friend Lady Cloncurry. She wrote and published four new books that year and saw six others continue in reprint. Two years earlier *BM* had commissioned her to write the firm's history and the enormous amount of research and writing required for *Annals of a Publishing House* continued throughout this period. Her productivity had reached almost legendary status within the literary community, though it was used as much to question the calibre of her work as to assert the (middle-class) merit of her character, and she was still widely regarded as "the Queen Victoria" of the republic of letters (Skelton, *BM* Jan. 1883).

Both of Oliphant's sons had died by 1896--Cyril in 1890 and Cecco in 1894 --as had most of her closest friends. Because of the rheumatism that increasingly restricted her physical activity and the onset of the cancer that eventually killed

her, Oliphant's life had become one of rather sedentary seclusion. Her correspondence and autobiography reveal that between all the losses of her loved ones, the failure of her health, and the waning of her popularity, she was somewhat bitter about what she perceived as her abandonment by all those whose affection and esteem she had laboured so long and hard to secure.

The 'light' writing of prolonged fiction was now a growing burden for Oliphant, both physically and emotionally. The demands of monthly serialisation were too much for her tired body (this was the year she reported having "worked a hole in my right forefinger--with the pen I suppose!--and can't get it to heal,--also from excessive use of that little implement" [*A&L* 427]) and she found herself more and more out of step with the changes in literary fashion. The influences of the decadent movement were everywhere with its extravagantly sensual rejection of traditional artistic forms and human relations and, if "League" is a reliable indicator, she felt lost in the ever-more modernist literary world where the limits of acceptable representation, particularly with respect to women, no longer precluded the clear sexualisation of the subject (Clarke, "Paradoxes" 38). Trela adds that "she felt the foregrounding of sex a contrivance, a distortion of the way she believed most people really lived and acted" (13). Consequently, this paper, which Oliphant claims once again with her initials, is very defensive of the terms and conditions of her cultural authority as a professional representative/representor of womanhood. For this reason, her 'conservative' tone in this paper may be

understood to be an attempt to buttress her declining cultural authority (Bourdieu 350). In her view, Hardy's bleak but titillating exposition of human sexuality in *Jude, the Obscure* (the book that ostensibly motivated this piece) exploits the body of woman to serve the male author's economic interests. She constructs him as a kind of panderer to the "basest" of human desires whose supply to the literary market simultaneously creates an acceptable cultural demand for the product and models that product as a progressive from of representational honesty. Even further, she suggests the market's necessary sexualisation of any female bodies subjected to its forces through circulation either as commodified products or commodifiable producers.

Oliphant's bid for the authority necessary to resist or even supersede the literary market's reproduction/redefinition of women as predominantly sexual (rather than sexed) subjects incorporates all the aspects of her identity that substantiate her cultural centrality as a literary professional who is also at this point in her life something of an icon of feminine middle-class respectability. An unpublished letter to *BM's* editors reveals that this was a deliberate strategy: "I have been thinking over Hardy's book and I . . . feel sure that it might . . . be my duty to treat it and a few others of the same kind seriously[,] putting my name to the article. . . . The evil is very great--I only doubt if my name is authoritative enough to denounce it" (MS 4635).

Although she claims late in the article that "it is not as a critic" that she

takes up the productive ramifications of works such as Hardy's (148), she has already devoted the previous thirteen pages to demonstrating her professional capacity to comprehend the cultural and market implications of woman's embodied subjection (even at the level of representation) to the process of commodification. This demonstration of her authority begins on the very first page of "League" where she unequivocally assumes the power to determine what the circulation of particular modes of literary production means to English readers (135). The power she invokes, according to Bourdieu's work, is that of "'legitimated apprehension'" (3). Under its auspices she promises to reveal the potential danger inhering to consumption of illegitimate representations. Such commodities, she says, will 'alienate' the consumer from 'true' Englishness, which is also, in her work, true morality:

> we are now in presence of a similar misrepresentation [of society as being exemplified by that which circulates in the literary market place], which threatens soon to produce almost as strong an impression as that which the French has succeeded in doing. . . . [T]here is too strong a current setting that way [i.e. away from definitions of 'authentic' Englishness] to be overlooked or neglected and there is in the Scandal a still more oppressive element than in that of France. ("League" 136)

The primary responsibility for this potential 'othering' of the domestic reader through consumption falls upon the entirely interested self-production of the new style of novelists, whose motives Oliphant identifies as the puerile desire for sensational self-distinction ("the inherent love to shock which is motive enough

for the young writer") and "the more practical consciousness that it is profitable to shock" ("League" 136). Her tone, here, is almost that of the alarmed but understanding matriarch, who watches her potential successors to cultural power as they begin to produce themselves in conformity with the perceived desires of their self-realising market: "Not to take advantage of a weakness [for sensation] is almost beyond the strength of human nature, longing for success, and finding it difficult to attain by more legitimate means" (136). In the process of determining the representational criterion for 'legitimate' literary self-production, then, Oliphant focuses on the social function of the representation itself. Bourdieu's work indicates that by doing so, she is grounding her right to determine legitimacy upon a specifically middle- class ethic of appreciation (5), or in Oliphant's own words, upon the values of "the ordinary people[,] . . .the arbiters of the world" ("League" 149). This powerful group is her intended protectorate: "the ordinary reader,--the men and women who read the Magazines, the public whom we address in these pages" ("League" 140):

> What is now freely discussed as the physical part [of love], and treated as the most important, had hitherto been banished [as "subjects . . . considered immoral or contrary to good manners, in the widest sense of the words"] from the lips of decent people, and as much as possible from their thoughts. ("League" 136, 137)

For Oliphant, here, it is the commodification for profit of the "Sex-question" in general that exceeds the representational limits of legitimacy, but it is the concomitant market sexualisation of the body of her "who was supposed to be

spared" that is the particularly dangerous productive potential of such interested self-realisation ("League" 137). In Hardy's case, the refusal of ordinary representational constraints does not partake of artistic licence, but of marketable licentiousness. She says it "marked the moment of his supposed emancipation from prejudices of modesty which had previously held him . . . from full enunciation of what was in him. . . . and thus affords us the strangest illustration of what Art can come to when given over to an exposition of the unclean" (138). While admitting Hardy's innovative genius, she denies him the cultural stature of an experimental artist by linking his creative intention to the materialising function its production of difference cannot help but serve (Bourdieu 3). Even further, not only is the constitutional (moral) substance of the writer exposed and produced at the moment of representational excess, it is also capable of reproducing itself within the subjectivity of the consumers who comprise and create the material basis of the market that they also produce:

> It is, we are assured, chiefly by women that novels are read; . . . and that there is a large class among them more apt than any other class in the world to be dazzled by false philosophy, which enables them to believe that they are intellectual and above the level of the general. I suppose it is by their influence that Mr Grant Allen [through his novel about cohabitation outside of marriage] has attained his twentieth edition, and it is to them that his theories and those of his school are most dangerous. ("League" 149)

Thus, the reciprocal production of this particularly configured supply and demand in the market place alienates the reading (female) public from its

expression of a specifically (middle-)classed version of ideal(ly desexualised) womanhood: "If the English public supports him in it, it will be to the shame of every individual who thus confesses himself to like and accept what the author himself acknowledges to be unfit for the eyes--not of girls and young persons only, but of the ordinary reader" ("League" 140). The inevitable 'otherness' of the woman--whose individual(ising) interest it serves to identify herself through consumption as "above the level of the general [class]"--also allows her to be (re)produced in resemblance to the commodifiable flesh of the subject woman of the literary product. That is, this reader's pandering to the urges of her own desires (for ascendant distinction and titillation) produces her within the private domain of literary consumption as the ambitiously sexualised material basis of the market whose conditions of participation she also determines. Her identity can no longer take resource for authenticity from the essentialised execution of alienated domestic labour. Such a market-executed refusal of what Bourdieu refers to as an "adherence . . . to the tastes and distastes which more than declared opinions forge the unconscious unity of [the middle] class" resigns the improperly consuming woman to a moral and cultural exile from acceptability (77). At the same time, Oliphant's revulsion for Hardy's work "consecrates [her] social identity . . . by transmitting the values, virtues and competences which are the basis for legitimate membership in [the] bourgeois dynast[y]" that social policing had become by the end of the nineteenth century (Bourdieu 76-77). In the literary hands of Hardy and

his ilk, woman becomes merely the market-oriented and sexualised female body which Oliphant says is self-full "Flesh . . . merciless[ly] calculati[ng] . . . what will be profitable to herself" from her realisation of a rampantly embodied (and, thus, bestialised) domestic self ("League" 139).

According to Oliphant's scheme, then, professional writing is the threshold of the market's access to the ideally (middle-)classed female body. Consequently, the paid writer must displace the value-producing body of woman with the body of her valuable (because desexualised) works in order to preclude the extra-literary production of commodifiable female bodies and the revelation of the writer's materially interested (which is to say potentially sexually or economically generative) participation in the self-productive operation of the cultural market place. The result of the literary failures under discussion to withhold the female body from subjection within and to market forces is "to select as the most important thing in existence, one small (though no doubt highly important) fact of life" ("League" 140). In other words, it is to reduce the self-realising expression of essential womanhood to the sexualised productive capacity of her body rather than to her maternity with all its connotations of nurture, moral interiority, and other-oriented labour and service.

If, as Oliphant argues, the conventionalised management of the female body's productive potential is the measure of the culture available to be claimed by "all people who have ceased to be savage" (or, in other words, who are 'truly

English'), then "reticences and modesties of convention" become the conditions (of absence) under which participation in the capitalist literary market--as either a consumer or producer--facilitates the realisation of an English self as the material benefactor of a moralised cultural production ("League" 144). The female body that is to be kept "clean" of its market potential to produce (through commodified or dollar-value-laden modelling) sexualised social relations--"corrupt morals, debased[d] . . . conversation, and defile[d] . . . thoughts"--must be denied public materialisation in a negative proof of the domestic site of its embodied realisation: "we do not prove our cleanliness by stepping into our bath in the sight of all the world, rather we prove something quite different" (144, 145). That is, the attribute of "cleanliness" with all its moral associations is precluded by its publicly embodied production in the interests of advantageous self-identification. Such a displacement in literature of the traditional commodification of female sentiment, which is the effect of novels depicting the quotidian negotiation of human relations and the affiliative, authorising effect of Oliphant's own essay writing, "puts foremost and prominent as the chief fact of life, for discussion and display, that which even the savage keeps more or less private to himself, and which the sacredness and mystery wherein the wonderful origins of life are instinctively shrouded, preserve alone from its natural resemblance to the traffic of the lower creation" (149).

"Traffic" here also connotes both the sexual and market relations from

which Oliphant exempts herself with her emphatically domesticated authority to specify (name) the determining sentiments of this literary mode of cultural, social, and self production. These forms of potentially authenticating productivity are at stake and at risk in Oliphant's version of the operations of the capitalist literary market. In this way, she is the voice of the conservative, corrective market-participant (both consumer and producer) asserting her legitimated right to reproduce and re-efface her own materialisation of a particularly (middle-) classed female identity. She is, ultimately, one of the "ordinary . . . arbiters of the world" ("League" 149) adamantly refusing the power of this commodification of her representative body to displace the value-production of her authorising body of (domesticated) work. As such, she rightfully and needfully desubstantiates the cultural legitimacy of an acknowledged "[literary] Master" and that interested and excessively materialising production which might come "from any Master's hand" (138).

* * *

Throughout this group of papers on 'the woman question', Oliphant moves gradually toward a position of overt, if not entirely unreserved, support for the Victorian feminists' cause. While she does not ever completely align herself with the feminist activists of her day, many of her ideas about the rightful place, value, and nature of women's work emerge in these divergently conservative articles with consistently radical implications for the changing role of women in Victorian

society. In each of the essays I have considered, Oliphant takes maternity to be the only sphere of labour 'naturally' reserved exclusively to anyone. According to her, the eternal, inherent, and inevitable alienability of that material, self-realising female production of others' lives is a feminine heritage which indicates woman's essential suitability for participation in capitalist schemes of value determination. That is, woman's physical production of others' lives and identities--in the senses of giving birth; the in-home supplying of food, shelter, and comfort; and the domestic materialisation of the family's signs of its class identity--is the necessarily alienated means by which she will produce herself as a 'true' woman and express her essential fit(ness) within the capitalist system whose conditions for production at once justify and create the ideological/cultural dominance of the professional middle class in Victorian society.

Even in the face of Oliphant's conservative reservations about woman's capacity (or lack of the same) to compete freely in the labour market (including the intellectual labour market) because of her biologically determined and always previous identificatory commitment of her body to a (middle-)classed version of maternity, the assumptions about woman that underwrite Oliphant's positions radicalise the role and potential expressions of 'true' womanhood in society's reproduction of itself within the conditions of the capitalist market. The premises of her arguments reveal the Victorian doctrine of separate spheres for what this author suggests it really is: a falsely conceived exemption of all domestic(ated)

labour (and of domestic life itself) from the market in which cultural value adheres to that which has the power to command economic value and in which culture itself (as a social determinant) is produced.

Throughout these essays Oliphant consistently argues that woman's labour (both maternal and waged) is not (and never was) truly outside these contemporary market conditions of production, however much its value is left out of public accounts of the credit women merit for their contribution to (commodifiable) production. While this denial of value is inevitable, given woman's ideological confinement to a classed sphere of embodied nonwork, Oliphant repeatedly claims that it is also an ideological sleight of hand. The only legitimate confinement of woman's productive potential is that of her body's capacity for maternity, or her sexualised labour, which materialises her as woman at the same time that it produces an inevitably othered body for the supply of the (commodity and labour) market. That is, this legitimating confinement, according to Oliphant, extends only to woman's body, which is the material(ising) basis of her own and society's production of her/itself. If this female body is apprehended by the public market in which its production circulates (with or without any recognition of its implicit potential for real economic value) then the sexual conditions of its essentialised production become simultaneously apprehensible within and by that public site of self-realisation. In this way, woman's denial or effacement of her materiality emerges as the criterion for her legitimate and (therefore) authenticating admission

to participate in the commodifying operations of the market place.

The effect of Oliphant's arguments about the resemblance of woman's 'natural' conditions of domestic (re)production to those of the public market's production of society and culture is to authorise her professional labour and identity on the basis of her demonstrated self-effacement and (thereby proven) -disinterestedness in the market production of her public(ised) womanhood. While this particularly-configured or -classed authority permits the legitimately public circulation of Oliphant's paid self-expression, which becomes in her work the subjective and normative reflection of her motivating and defining interiority, it also limits the kinds of alternatives for woman that she can support under its aegis. That is, as a woman, Oliphant may commodify the sentiments that express a prior realisation of her self, as long as she does not also commodify (or even appear to support the commodification of) the female body that (under)writes her authorised self-expression. Since all the identificatory possibilities lying outside the confines of maternity are, for Oliphant, negotiated and constructed according to the conditions of production of the market in which they acquire and produce material and/or cultural value, then the woman who seeks a public form of self-identification according to the terms of capitalist principles, which open the market itself to middle-class dominance and ascendant mobility, must prevent her body's emergence as the market token of her identifying feminine resources. Should this body do more than just verge on the public domain, as it does in Oliphant's view

in the cases of platform suffrage activists and noncelibate professional women (who will publicly declare the dominance of their sexualised bodies and their consequent lack of fit(ness) within both the categories of professional and middle-class maternal being by simultaneously committing their bodies to two mutually-exclusive domains of self-production), then authenticating resource to a moralised feminine interior is precluded to them.

Notes

1. 'Popular' here is intended to reflect Victorian literary culture's ambivalence towards the high economic value of appealing to the masses as it was set against the perceived high value of writing to and for the closed and classed cultural aristocracy of letters.

2. Most of the criticism about Oliphant's career laments her refusal to voice a radical feminism. The most virulent of this condemnation came from Virginia Woolf in *Three Guineas* (Hogarth Press, 1938) where she makes the author's dependence on paid contributorship preclusive to speaking 'truly' to any cultural issue: "Mrs Oliphant sold her brain, her very admirable brain, prostituted her culture and enslaved her intellectual liberty in order that she might earn her living and educate her children. . . . [I]f we applaud the courage of those who do what she did, we can spare our selves the trouble of addressing our appeal to them, for they will no more be able to protect disinterested culture and intellectual liberty than she was" (106). Clearly Oliphant was correct to fear the association of her sexuality with her literary labour's circulation in the market place. Others who have deplored Oliphant's apparent refusal are Vineta and Robert Colby (*The Equivocal Virtue: Mrs. Oliphant and the Victorian Market Place* 1966) and Merryn Williams (*Margaret Oliphant: A Critical Biography* 1986). The tide is slowly turning upon this view, however.

3. Perhaps even because of them since they enabled (or enforced) the simple and slightly bohemian lifestyle of the struggling artistic household. The Oliphants could afford no servants to help tend their two children and the same lack of funds ensured much informal socialising with others in the same boat and of the same bent.

4. It was a position forced upon her, perhaps, by the proscription against the legitimate public presence of woman that she develops with the argument of this paper.

5. According to the Foucauldian implications of Oliphant's theory, woman's nature becomes identifyingly circumscribed within circulating discourse by what the woman-as-commodity-subject does not do: contribute to the economic aspect of family identity-production, possess the inherent economic potential of her domestic labour, submit to the alienation necessary for the family breadwinner's own claims to valuing identity and determining power.

6. The Carlyles' influence on Oliphant's work should not be overlooked or underestimated since the couple appear to have read it as it was published and Jane would relay her husband's comments during subsequent visits with Oliphant.

7. This novel was the fourth in one of Oliphant's most successful works, *The Chronicles of Carlingford.*

8. The author of the third volume of this set, John Blackwood's daughter Mrs. Gerald Porter, indicates that this desire was voiced in a letter:

> 'I fear the article on Mill's 'Subjection of Women' is too dry. Confound the fellow, he argues as if mankind, male and female, were equally stocks or stones, or, if positively not equal at first, to be made so by teaching of him--Mill. The man is blinded by arrogance, and instead of loving his fellow-creatures, he hates and would domineer over every one who did not agree with him. I wish you could throw in some fun and scourge him.' (3: 164)

The resemblance of the argument Oliphant develops in her essay to the editor's sentiments is striking. I can only speculate whether or not she too received a letter of this nature, though the article John Blackwood refers to here seems quite clearly to be one of Mozley's.

9. As Chapter Four will discuss in relation to Mrs. Gore's negotiation of this very market place, women had to undertake entrepreneurial opportunism very cautiously because the overt self-interest inherent to the practice had particularly unsavoury implications for their respectability. The successful female entrepreneur could be seen to be too accessible both to and by means of the market.

10. A comparison of Mozley's and Oliphant's articles would be fruitful but impossible in the space I have here.

11. She saw this essay published in May, but in the previous twelve months, there had been only two articles in *Blackwood's*, one short story in *Cornhill Magazine* and one ongoing fiction series in *Macmillan's* (it finished in November of 1880). Given the needs of her many dependents, it must have been a very anxious time. Although fourteen titles are credited with certainty to her authorship in 1880 and another twenty-one in the year before, twenty-three of the two-year total (of thirty-five) were American editions from which she likely received no financial benefit; two were Tauchnitz editions of existing works (a gesture of literary status that was notoriously devoid of commensurate economic increase); and eight were either reprints of earlier books or compiled series (all of whose copyrights had been bought, as was the common practice, at the point of their submission for original publication). The Colbys' work on Oliphant also documents many of these publishing details, providing an invaluable aid in sorting through a bewildering volume of records. See particularly Chapter Five: 'Author and Publisher' in *The Equivocal Virtue*.

Publishing piracies and profiteering were not the only kinds of professional alienation with which Oliphant was struggling at this particular moment. John Blackwood had died in the fall of 1879 and his successor, William Blackwood III, immediately instituted a much more interventionist editorial policy than that of his late uncle (MS 4410). As a result, Oliphant found herself in the position of having to flex the authority of her experience and her known marketability to prevent what she referred to in an 1880

letter to the new editor as having "the special heart of one's article . . . cut out. . . . This you will perceive is rather aggravating for a writer with a real object at hand. . . . I should have preferred to withdraw the paper ["Schools and Colleges", July 1880] had I known--as it was merely a preference for the Magazine that induced me to submit it to you, a place being open for it elsewhere. . . . To be refused is nothing--but this is a very serious drawback. (MS 4410)

On the home front, Oliphant was mourning the death of her nephew Frank Wilson, who had left her home to make a career in India. She recalled him in 1894 as "the most trustworthy and satisfactory boy in the world, loving home, fond of amusement and diversion, but only in the right ways" and in a letter shortly after his death she says that "of all the family, my boy Frank was the one I was most secure about and had least anxiety for" (*A&L* 139, 283). Oliphant's remaining boys, however, Cyril (now twenty-four) and Cecco (twenty-one), were beginning to be the source of great anxiety for the household. Cyril in particular was showing signs not only of leaving unfulfilled the academic potential promised by his early scholastic successes, but also of becoming cynically rebellious towards both his mother and her middle-class valuation of industry, sobriety (as a physical and attitudinal attribute), and domestic orientation.

Chapter Three

"The sober man of business"

By the time Oliphant wrote her two volumes of *Annals of a Publishing House*, the history's 'happy ending' was a matter of common knowledge. Both the firm and its dynasty of publisher-editor proprietors were firmly entrenched as influential members of the Victorian cultural centre. In view of this eventuality, the agenda of these volumes seems clear cut: to narrate, explain, and justify the Blackwoods' contemporary importance to literature in general and to the periodical industry in particular. The narration itself was perhaps the easiest of the three tasks. Since she had reams of records and correspondence at her disposal, a reconstruction of William Blackwood's rise to eminence and his sons' maintenance of it was a simple, if arduous, job of chronological compilation. Explaining and justifying that rise were tasks of a different order.

When William Blackwood entered the literary industry, he was little more than a tradesman with a dignified sideline in antiquarian speculation. Such an association with the 'vulgar' operations of the market place would have been a profound limitation to his potential for valuable social identity. As a bookseller, he could aspire to only the lower strata of the middle class and this early nineteenth-century entrepreneur aimed himself at far loftier levels. Perhaps even worse than his known start as a hawker of books was the fact that he was enormously successful at it. The last of Oliphant's tasks, then, required her to

represent the family's history in such a way that the founder's ambitious self-making could not be construed as the pretentious climb of a contemptible *nouveau riche*. Accordingly, the Blackwoods' chronicler creates a class myth of corporate genesis which places William at the beginning of magazine time and in a critically determining position. It is an attempt to reconcile the tension between the periodical's (and its producer's) "origins in the sway and bustle of the market place as well as in the tower" in favour of the tower (Brake 32).

The first sections of my analysis of *APH* will look at the language with which Oliphant recreates the editor-publisher as an entrepreneurial hero. Such a strategy allows her to claim his middle-classed nature as the irresistable source of his beneficent drive for market domination. Just as the traditional mythic hero must prepare himself through physical conflict to conquer geographic territories, I will show that the corporate hero of the nineteenth-century's literary industry must realise himself through capitalist competiton in order to establish his empire within the cultural territory of the Republic of Letters. However, since the measure of victory within the emerging capitalist system was profit, Blackwood (and Oliphant) had to safeguard against the reduction of his commodity production to mere money grubbing. In *Modes of Production* Norman Feltes distinguishes between commodity-book and commodity-text across the difference in the product's immediacy or deferral of surplus value, which he suggests is as much a cultural as an economic gain (12-14). I will use his distinction here to demonstrate

how the representation of Blackwood's self-realising periodical project avoids the danger of its vulgarisation. It does so in two ways: first, by making the interests of culture--the interpellation of readers to the approved ideological framework of the text's production--his first professional object; second, by establishing the journal as a commodity without closure, a system of production with a perpetually-deferred bottom line of profit. These strategies, as Bourdieu says they must, foreground the divergent interests of "winning a market . . . and concern for cultural distinction, the only objective basis" of a producer's singularity (229).

In previous chapters I have argued that the rhetorical management of a cultural producer's body was a way to read the individual's will to public power and intention for self-distinction. As support for my contention that woman's body had to be effaced at the level of public apprehension in order to prevent its transgressive implication in the operation of the market she necessarily negotiated, I will demonstrate in the next sections of this chapter how Blackwood himself deployed his body in the collaborative work of his magazine's first real number to both assert and materialise his conquering intention literally within the public domain of the journal's circulation. In my examination of the capitalist dynamics of Blackwood's and his 'brotherhood's' self-representation in the "Chaldee MS," the editor's middle-class corporeity emerges as the material sign and vindication of his dominance over both his demonised competitors and his alienated subordinates. The bodies of John Wilson, John Lockhart, and James Hogg--

original members of the *BM* brotherhood--emerge as the identifying source not only of their legitimated instrumentalisation in the proprietor's struggle for ascendancy, but also of their classed potential for self-expressive excess. According to the terms of Oliphant's reiteration of Blackwood's myth, the writer's capacity for rampant self-embodiment within the market is beneficially constrained by the founder's appropriation of their literary labour to his self-realising conquest of the Republic.

The benefit of this editorial control over the means and forms of literary self-production becomes apparent in Oliphant's representation of *BM* as a viable site for the negotiation of authenticated masculine identity. This mediated process begins with the signs of class claimed by and attributed to the writing body in and through the submitted literary product. I will illustrate this point by comparing the historian's readings of John Lockhart's and William Maginn's embodiment of class value(s), a reading she verifies with an interpretation of their self-expressive demeanour towards the market place. I will then argue that her version of the myth establishes Victorian capitalism's defining system of production through alienation as integral and essential to the authentication of literary self-identification. Since the editor-proprietor is the figure poised at the line between cultural reproduction and the capitalist market in which it occurs, he is the 'natural' gatekeeper of both domains.

By the end of the firm's mythic age, this "keeper of the channel" occupies

the only professional literary body that can continue to be invested with an acceptable sense of full materiality. In subsequent chapters I will show the repectively decreasing degree of embodiment openly and safely declared within representations of male and female writers. This sliding scale of allowable corporeity suggests the writing body as the knowable effect of market proximity. While such an implication in material production is less acceptable for male writers than for the editor's figuration, it is borne still less comfortably by women contributors. I will also demonstrate that this scale, which parallels self-embodiment with knowledge of materiality (in the senses of economic acquisition and potential sexual productivity) and with masculinity, charts both a hierarchy of gendered identity and related scheme of genred sites for its valued realisation/expression. However, I have much ground to cover before getting to the implications of this scale for men and women of periodical letters. I will begin with Oliphant's mythic inscription of William Blackwood's founding of *BM*.

* * *

As mythic heroes go, William Blackwood's identifying characterisation at Oliphant's hand is not entirely typical. Her opening abnegation of the traditional hero's "'ell of genealogy'" signals both the point of departure and of connection with the conventions of identificatory mythology: "Such preliminaries are unnecessary to a man who, in a better sense than that of any of the Norman invaders of whom others brag, was the father of his own fortunes" (*APH* 1: 1). On

the one hand, this statement locates a superior authenticity in the identity enabled by Blackwood's self-fathered fortunes in comparison to that available from claims of heroic Norman descent. On the other hand, it suggests that the self-made entrepreneur can claim an identifying connection with the ancestral invaders' incursion into, and assimilating occupation of, alien territory. Despite her disavowal of antecedents, Oliphant goes on to situate Blackwood within a family tradition, however failed, of prospering in Trade:

> The name came originally, as . . . so many notable families have come, from Fife, . . . near the town, once a regal seat, of Dunfermline. The particular branch from which the Edinburgh Blackwoods sprang had, in the person of a well-to-do burgess of Edinburgh, the ill-fortune, which half of Scotland shared, to be ruined by the terrible fate of the enterprise of Darien, and was thus reduced to comparative poverty. From that period the family records are vague, until the name was revived by the founder of a house which has had so much to do with the great efflorescence of literature in the early part of this century as to figure among the limited list, confined to three or four only, of the Great Publishers who have given a special development to that much-abused but often important profession.
>
> William Blackwood was born in Edinburgh on the 20th November 1776: and the period of his youth and early manhood was . . . one in which Edinburgh was at its highest glory as a centre of intellectual life and influence . . . [T]hus [were] brought together many of the men who swayed and were born to sway the conquering race of the world. (1:3-4)

While Oliphant clearly intends that her readers understand Blackwood's legitimate possession of the blood of the prosperous as his birthright, she also calls him "the founder of a house" whose potential for "Great"ness derives from his formative relation with a particular moment of social and cultural development. It

was, she says, the moment when "literature became a recognisable agent in national life" (*APH* 1: 5). Implicit in this observation is the idea that the market place was where the nature of this agency was being determined. Therefore, dominance of that field decided who would authorise the values that were to be produced and consumed as 'value' by circulation. Blackwood's heroic incursion, then, as Oliphant constructs it, is into the literary territory of cultural power, or, in other words, into the recently-conceived Republic of Letters.[1] I will return shortly to Oliphant's suggestive representation of this domain as dangerously vulnerable at this critical moment of succession to reproduction in the purely commercial image of some of the contenders for power. As Ina Ferris puts it, "[t]he interest of early [reviewers] . . . explicitly lay less in what was being written than in what was--or should be--read" (25). Before undertaking this issue more fully, I will establish Oliphant's deployment of class signifiers in her descriptions of Blackwood as a strategic legitimation of the editor's beneficial right to assume the cultural authority. She makes this right inherent to his middle-class identity.

From Oliphant's summary of William's (supposed lack of) antecedents, the publisher emerges, not as an eventually-assimilated foreign invader of the nation's land, but as a domestically-produced (and domestic-heritage producing) conqueror of industry and culture. This conqueror's tale, however, valorises the particularly middle-class nature of its subject as the essentialised prerequisite to his fathering of his own fortunes (*APH* 1:1). According to Oliphant, Blackwood's eventual

field was "'the Trade' *par excellence*" (1: 5). However, the narrative of social mobility it enables does not aspire to "the tall houses of Mrs Margaret Bethune Baliol and her kind" (1: 5). Instead, she says, "[o]ur sphere is a different one . . . [It is] on levels of social comfort, fresher if less picturesque, and alive with so much stir of rising activity and enterprise." In this way Oliphant suggests that Blackwood's tale of self-realisation is amenable to a traditionally-consistent process of myth formation. Here, though, the age-old quest for masculine self-discovery through political and geographic appropriation is replaced by "the nineteenth-century's class struggle for dominace over culture and over legitimacy" (Bourdieu 93). In keeping with these objectives, she intimates that this process can continue to be deployed within culture to provide a structure of meaning for identities realised according to the values by which the structure signifies and defines value itself.

Almost immediately, Oliphant begins to describe Blackwood's childhood. Her characterisation claims precisely the same "inner current" of class determination for his eventual professional authority as that which she has linked to literature's ascension to national agency (*APH* 1: 5):

> His father died early, we may suppose without having had time to make much provision for his family. . . . There are no details . . . of young Blackwood's education or schools in the scanty remnants of family tradition. He began his apprenticeship at fourteen, so that there was not much time for school-training, nor probably was it very necessary. Such a man as he was afterwards to be educates himself unconsciously, by much reading, and that close observation

> unawares which furnishes the mind without betraying even to the possessor the origin of the stores which gather there. . . . [T]he lad worked out his indentures diligently, with all the instincts of a man born to advancement, unconsciously laying by many a suggestion and experience for use in his after-career--going cheerfully home at night to his mother and the society of his brothers." (1: 8-9)

Oliphant presents William Blackwood here as an aspiring young man whose ambition is motivated not so much by a desire for a specific professional goal, as by the irresistible impetus of an unconscious class nature in search of an appropriate site for its own realisation. Such a portrayal of a domestic arrival at cultural competence, Bourdieu says, will naturalise legitimacy by making it a "precondition"of social origin. The attributes of industry, diligence, self-discipline, and cheerful domesticity outlined in this passage ensure our understanding that Blackwood's nature is middle-class to its home-loving core. She also indicates that the nurture of this irresistible nature took place within the market where the possibilities for the realisation of "[s]uch a man as he was afterwards to be" were determined in the first instance by his consumption of literary commodities, or, as she puts it, "by much reading."

Passive consumption, however, is not a market practice which can assure the realisation of identifying dominance. As a result, she goes on to portray him actively transforming his consumerism into a form of market expertise that Michael Harris calls "book trade speculat[ion]" (79). In Oliphant's hands the speculator's acumen is neutralised of its negative association with gambling and

mere luck. She rewrites it as the power of discrimination. This attribute is so natural and imminent within his individual constitution that it becomes a recognisable mark upon his successors of their genetic fitness to assume his corporate mantle. Once again, she emphasises the critical role of his middle-class nature in his self-realising negotiation of the forces driving commodity production:

> [y]oung Blackwood, with the strong, practical good sense which distinguished him, was probably aware intuitively that sound and complete understanding of a subject within the immediate range of life and duty was the most solid foundation upon which a man could build his life who meant to thrive and do well, and to waste none of his energies on unproductive labours. . . . [He] had begun at a very early age to study, and compare, . . . what was really curious and valuable . . . till he learned to know, without in the least knowing what he was learning, that astute distinction between what will be popular and what will not, which he possessed so strongly in after-life, and which descended to his sons after him--a rare and invaluable gift. This faculty is not a thing which depends on mere literary perception and taste, for sometimes the public will prefer the best and sometimes the worst, and very frequently indeed picks up something between the two, by some fantastic rule of selection which never has been fathomed by any man but a heaven-born publisher. (*APH* 1: 10-12)

This passage idicates that Blackwood's desire to realise his intuitively prepared self in "'the Trade'" is accessible to (re)presentation as a "higher development" of the entrepreneur's relation to culture (*APH* 1: 5). Oliphant's erasure of "the visible marks of [his discrimination's] genesis . . . legitimate[s]" the editor's aspiration to the determining power it underwrites (Bourdieu 68). For this reason, his ambition can be mobilised as the legendary dedication of a truly middle-class self to his ordained task: the determining discrimination and mediation of value circulating

within the literary market (Feltes *Literary Capital* 39). In other words, the history begins to transform the literary tradesman into the cultural professional.

Long before Blackwood became the head of 'Maga,' he had already begun to establish a market for wares associated with his name. In Oliphant's words, he had

> gain[ed] recognition everywhere as a safe and steady man of business, not given to flights of fancy, but full of enthusiasm for literature--which is a thing we are but little accustomed to look for nowadays in the new members of 'the Trade'--and with a distinct opinion and judgment of his own: while his family life continued full of sunshine and a benignant atmosphere of kindness.
>
> (*APH* 1: 22-23)

Before going on to examine Oliphant's representation of what she suggests is the literary industry's purely reflexive accreditation of his self-training, I must digress briefly to take note of the obviously important but still peripherally-present role of Blackwood's family life.

All of the last three long citations I have used in this chapter evoke the editor's relation to his family and to the domestic domain. In the first of this group, Oliphant suggests this relationship as a parenthetical return "to his mother and the society of his brothers" after his determining toils in the public realm (*APH* 1: 9). In the second, she makes his sons' possession of their father's faculty of discrimination central to her proof of his ordained and dynastic place at the valuing centre of culture. In the third, a colon precedes the fragment that appends mention of his private world to a description of the distinction Blackwood was

acquiring publicly for being "a safe and steady man of business" whose capacity for autonomous judgement signifies his independence from external determinations of quality and value.

There is a striking difference between Oliphant's deployment of home and family in her representation of Blackwood's career and in her own in *A&L*. Whereas she constructs the private domain and its classing operation in her autobiography as at once the authorising source and object of her professional self-production, she suggests it in the editor's biography as more the evidential effect of his prior determination by class instincts. These are the same intuitive responses which she claims have descended to him through the blood of his forefathers and by the intellectual culture that was, in lieu of a meaningful paternal presence, his self-formative model. It could be argued that this difference is merely the consequence of the lack of "details" Oliphant observes in the first pages of *APH*, but her consistent emphasis throughout her portrayal of his youth and early manhood is on the originating and authenticating nature of his ambitious self-making. His mother is never even named "in the history of the little [Blackwood] household" (1: 8). Instead, Oliphant notes only her "guardianship . . . [of] three well-trained, well-dispositioned sons . . . which soon turned, as they grew up into manhood, into a kind and watchful care of her[,] . . . the most fitting and beautiful development of such a relationship." William, here, does not seem so much the classed product of his mother's erased domestic labours, but more the

returning effect of his own instinctively extra-domestic and very visible toil. It seems clear that Oliphant intends her readers to understand Blackwood's "fitting" gratitude to his mother, but his domestic dedication is presented as evidence of his masculine capacity to exceed the private domain's feminine limits. In short, where Oliphant depends in *A&L* on her relationship to the middle-class domestic domain for her feminised authority to express herself publicly, Blackwood's private realm, as it appears in *APH*, awaits his public expression of an middle-classed and highly masculine self for its constitutive dependency upon him to declare its potential for ascendant social identification.

I will return to the important implications of this construction when I discuss Blackwood's self-representation within the market place in the pages of his first "real" number of his Magazine (*APH* 1: 111). For now I want to go back to Oliphant's portrayal of the literary industry's response to the signifying value of the editor's "completely independent . . . establish[ment of] himself . . . without the aid of [the] patronage or connection" that had been the means of individual mobility in the pre-capitalist operations of the feudal-style cultural market. She posits it as a gradual and reflexive coalescence of talent and inevitable success around the quiet and deserving (middle-class) centre:

> an increasing number of book-hunters and others [began to] gather round the young bookseller . . . whose names are enough to stir our hearts, Walter Scott chief among them: and visions of better things to come irradiated the dustiness of the old books, suggesting fresh new ones, damp and delightful, from the press, and fortune and reputation

within the reach (almost) of the young man's eager hand (1: 24)

This passage obliquely demonstrates Blackwood's knowing transformation of his petty-commodity enterprise (book-selling) into a highly capitalist mode of literary production. He is, in Feltes' words, recognising that "the organization of the market for books [is] only an extension of the organization of the production of books, the control of production, of which the 'publisher' is the specific form" (*Modes* 5). Even the eagerness for control, however, remains at a decorous (and distinguishing) distance from the avaricious avidity of "rivals in the same field [who were] a step before him in the race, and straining every nerve to keep that place, especially in respect to London agencies and other external signs of prosperity":

> the progress of [Blackwood's] business was quiet, and there was no rush for success nor any sensational strain at a new chance, until the steady advancement culminated in a crisis of which [he] was prepared and ready to take advantage. . . . It was the moment of a wonderful new flood of genius over the face of the country, and this had been accompanied by a generation of booksellers, scarcely accustomed as yet to the larger name of publisher, and not quite certain of the powers of that Pegasus which they were eagerly endeavouring on all sides to yoke to their private chariots .
>
> (*APH* 1: 24-25)

In what emerges as a consistent pattern throughout her narration of *Blackwood's Magazine*'s genesis, Oliphant mixes the language of biblical and classical mythology. By doing so she creates powerful (if mixed) metaphors for William Blackwood's identifying capacity both to recognise the pivotal moment

for which she suggests he was pre-ordained by his eminently suitable, prior self-realisation and to take beneficial command of it as he extracts his own "Pegasus" from "the flood of genius over the face of the country" (*APH* 1: 24-25). Like the biblical flood she invokes, her literary version marks the inception of a new order that promises to realise in the Republic of Letters, as does Blackwood's own emerging and merited centrality, "visions of better things to come" (1: 24).

"[T]he gift of discrimination" that he has already demonstrated as one aspect of his "heaven-born" potential for a valuable professional identity had never been, according to Oliphant, "more wanted than at [this] time when new codes were forming" (*APH* 1: 12). These codes addressed the operations of the literary market and its changing possibilities for "cultural . . . control [through] critical discourse" (Ferris 32). The "new form of the periodical,"she goes on to say, began as a luxury commodity, a frivolous, but "delightful stimulant of news and criticism . . . [for] the lively subjects of Queen Anne" to consume "along with their chocolate of a morning on certain happy days" (*APH* 1: 95-96). "[I]t was only in the nineteenth century [that it became] the serious Review, . . . a great organ of opinion, both political and literary, and an important commercial speculation, bringing large practical recompense" (*APH* 1:96).

This chronology misrepresents the history of the periodical industry which Michael Harris says went through " an upsurge in . . . production" as early as 1679 (67). Since newspapers rather than journals were the agents of this expansion, it

seems probable that Oliphant is endeavouring to distance Blackwood's enterprise from the history of a less-valued literary form. By making his House's founding simultaneous with and necessary to that of "the serious review" (*APH* 1:96), she transfers his entrepreneurial origins onto the more elevated ground of cultural innovation. In addition, her implicitly sexed language attributes previous modes of periodical production and consumption with superficial femininity, while the advent of the Review is masculinised by its association with profundity and sobriety (Ferris 31).

The *Edinburgh Review* was the first of these 'important' journals on the market, "which it took by storm" with its aggressive "revolt against the unbroken rule of the Tory in literature and life," "bec[oming] a kind of model for other undertakings opposed" to it (*APH* 1: 96). Oliphant implies, here, that the market foundation and impetus of the emerging literary code necessitated entrepreneurial self-realisation through the commodification of difference. She later reveals, however, that it simultaneously continued to ascribe 'real' value to that which disavowed any determining relation to the very market within which its significations acquired meaning and the possibility for a (nonetheless economically substantiated) mark of cultural importance: "The true champion and challenger of Jeffrey and his men [at *ER*,] as dauntless and inconsiderate of all secondary motives as their beginning had been, as rash, spontaneous, and brilliant[,] . . . should come in the shape of an Edinburgh Magazine. . . . [It was] a

thought that had been for some time vaguely forming in Blackwood's brain" (1: 97).

Oliphant neglects the business sense that Michael Harris intimates was behind Blackwood's expansion: "successful production of a periodical could be the principal means of sustaining an independent position within the trade" (78). Refusing to acknowledge this commercial consideration makes the editor's "desire from the beginning to make his place of business a centre of literary society, a sort of literary club where men of letters might find a meeting-place" seem to be his first professional object (*APH* 1:100). In Oliphant's account, Blackwood's centralisation of literary society around himself is also the creation of a literary labour pool. The selective exploitation of this resource will constitute the editor's identifying difference simultaneously with the members' expressive realisation of their own in his service. It is in fact a "fixed capital" resource for the future firm (Feltes *Modes* 61). "Among this lively company were two young men who would have been remarkable anywhere, if only for their appearance and talk, had nothing more remarkable ever been developed in them" (*APH* 1:101).

The two young men to whom she refers, here, are John Wilson and John Gibson Lockhart. While she ascribes their potential for difference to their attributional constitution, she also suggests, as I will show more fully later in this chapter, that this potential depended for valuable realisation on their distinguishing selection by the normatively middle-class Blackwood.

* * *

Throughout Oliphant's management of the firm's early history she regularly refers to 'the brotherhood' which began to coalesce around William Blackwood in 1816 as "idle young men" (*APH* 1:125). Despite their need for income or occupation, they lacked both the focus and means to realise the literary potential that Oliphant has suggested comprised one aspect of their "remarkabl[y]" classed destiny. This inadequacy was corrected when they met and submitted themselves to the middle-class consciousness of Blackwood,

> the sober man of business, who was like themselves in swiftness of mind and readiness of spirit [of young strength, impetuosity, and daring, which moved it to a kind of rapture,] and whose keen eye saw the advantage to be reaped from the very disadvantages, the reckless imprudence and dash, which are instruments in a cool and steady hand as good as any. . . . He withheld and subdued, when it was necessary, with great unconscious skill, with the constant steadiness and sense which always have their influence--and which were strengthened even by his faculty of being carried away and moved to enthusiasm by the flow of wit and genius, the only things that ever went to his head. (1: 125)

Oliphant makes many admiring references to the difficulty of Blackwood's largely successful control over the particular Pegasus that was to draw his name to eminence and influence in the periodical industry in particular and culture in general. Classic mythology depicts Pegasus springing from the corpse of the slain Medusa in much the same way that the young men constituting this figure have emerged from the feudalistic system of literary production. The death of this system has been signified, in turn, by Blackwood's independent self-making. The

following passage is representative of Oliphant's typical deployment of the editor's individualised (and inherently middle-classed) suitability for market participation/dominance to construct him as a Bellerephon figure:

> They were idle young men, and, according to all the usual estimates, it was a rash thing to depend upon them and their flighty exertions for the success of a grave undertaking [such as "the fateful periodical which was to make Blackwood's name and his fortune" (1: 173)]; but [he] had a keen eye for character, and divined his men more justly than their fellows: besides, he had the very exceptional gift of influencing and guiding the unruly Pegasus, which probably would not have gone soberly in harness for any other man. (1: 193)

Blackwood, here, like the mythic original, places a charmed bridle around his mount's mouth in order to accomplish the tasks that will make manifest his identity.

In Oliphant's construction, the exercise of Blackwood's inherently and definitively middle-class sobriety successfully circumscribes the typically classed excesses of these founding contributors. Thus Blackwood can be understood to be the patriarch of the brotherhood, whose members seek to express their own identity in a "medium [fit] for the opinions and ideas with which their minds were overflowing, and especially for that 'criticism of life' which . . . is the first mission and yearning of the young writer to get into print" (*APH* 1: 185). At the same time he is the heroic guardian of the middle-class's rightful ascendancy within the public domain. It is a claim of great power made on the editor's behalf, since the market is the site in which the expressive limits of individual self-realisation are to

be negotiated according to a changing literary and social code of value. Such a depiction of William Blackwood's classed nature, then, with its inherent suitability for comprehension of and dominating participation in the emerging capitalism of the early nineteenth century, partakes of the class myth of entrepreneurially-driven (but nonetheless implicitly merited) mobility in terms of status and influence. Within the conditions laid down by this myth, potential for cultural centrality depends for its realisation on successful command of the literary market and its forces: "Blackwood had now arrived at a point in his life when . . . that desire to 'make a spoon or spoil a horn' which is so strong among those predestined to fortune, had risen to fever-point within him . . . and all his faculties were on the watch for an opportunity to step forth from the usual routine, and make a distinct place for himself" (1: 93). The "Chaldee MS" and *APH* both contribute to the mythic reinscription of this individualised ascension according to the historically-validated inevitability of the fully capitalist system of production. This explanatory narrative shows commodification and the requirements of the market determining, in a newly naturalised way, the negotiable value of particular types of self and forms of literary self-expression brought to it, as well as the relative proximity of that self to a similarly market-determined cultural centrality.

The first number of *BM* under Blackwood's sole proprietorship appeared in October 1817. Up to that point he had had two "pseudo-literary men" as partners in his enterprise (*APH* 1: 98). Their names were "Mssrs Pringle and Cleghorn"

and they were responsible for finding or producing "the literary provision for the periodical, while Blackwood took the risk and expense of the printing and publishing" (1: 98-99). The inadequacies of the pair, however, proved nearly disastrous for the fledgling journal: "[the] dull editors . . . moulded painfully under [Blackwood's] vexed and impatient observation the dullest of inconsequent Magazines, instead of the brilliant organ he had dreamed of. . . . They had neither spirit nor energy for the position; and soon, according to the tale, they lost even the care and industry which might have made it possible for the sober periodical to go on" (1: 103-04). Their reliance on local news items, births, deaths, and 'insipid' articles betrays their intentional "pursuit of a wide . . . clientelle," a strategy which would "weaken . . . links with the . . . most 'significant' audience" (Bourdieu 442). Ferris notes that such attention to the "merely temporal" would also have obstructed the journal's authoritative identification "with the enduring republic of letters" (25-26). In addition to these failures in cultural acumen, both men exhibited a profound incomprehension of the business's requirements and even unscrupulousness in the repeated claims they made upon the paper's limited resources for already settled accounts:

> these ungenerous opponents . . . charg[ed] the publisher with a series of petty dishonesties, with eluding their claims for payment, and with keeping them in ignorance of the state of affairs. . . . It was natural that this very shabby artifice should have much exasperated a man who felt himself the loser, not only by more than two hundred pounds of honest money, but by all the defeated expectations of the previous six months, which linked his name with failure, a thing

> intolerable to his ardent mind. (*APH* 1: 109-10)

Eventually the two defected to serve under Blackwood's long-standing rival in the book-selling and -publishing industry, Archibald Constable, who was also the owner of *ER* (though this was not the paper he hired them to edit).

Despite the obvious shortcomings of the partners, Oliphant indicates that they were not the major obstacle to the continuing coeditorship. The real problem was their ultimate inability to facilitate Blackwood's realisation of the self "he had dreamed of" producing with "the brilliant organ" that would express his identifying capacity to command the market. "[W]ith the disappearance of these men and all the paraphernalia of their feebleness from the scene . . . . the real 'BLACKWOOD'S MAGAZINE' at last began" (*APH* 1:111). As Bourdieu observes, such a distinction seeks to reproduce "the opposition between those who make . . . policy, in deeds, in words or in thought, and those who undergo it, . . . [an] antithesis . . . which is at the heart of the dominant['s] representation . . . [and] evokes the opposition between [the two positions'] relation to the social world" (444). The issue, here, is clearly cultural power, and its articulation is class identity.

That first "real" number contained the "Chaldee MS", which, in Oliphant's words, was

> concerned chiefly [with] the quarrel between Mr Blackwood and the two editors who had wrecked his little Magazine and disappointed his hopes, and the larger strife and rivalry which existed between

> Constable and himself, one Edinburgh bookseller against another, along with the background of people, notable, yet only in [Scott's] case world-distinguished, who took part on either side.
> (*APH* 1: 117)

The importance of the MS to Blackwood and his intention to lay claim to a particular cultural and market niche is apparent from the amount of space Oliphant affords it in the *APH*. Her discussion of the document's conditions of production, reception, and effect on both the producers and the literary community spans nearly three chapters. The one devoted specifically to its circulation is entitled 'The World Turned Upside Down'. Apparently, this title does not exaggerate the impact of the satire:

> it is not too much to say that in its way it moved the world, and that readers who had never heard of half the characters in it, and to whom the personal peculiarities of the various men in Edinburgh who appeared in its scenes were altogether unknown, laughed and stormed, and disapproved, and grew solemn in reproof and denunciation, and laughed again--till the original little brown-covered brochure of the new periodical was torn in pieces by eager buyers and clamorous critics, and 'Blackwood's Magazine' leaped all at once into the knowledge, the curiosity, and the attention of the book-loving world. It was, perhaps, not the firmest of foundations, but it was a most effectual one. Edinburgh rose to it like one man, delighted, amused, offended, furious. Whatever after-criticism might be expended upon it--and that came pouring in on every side--this one thing was assured from the first day: that it had done what it was meant to do, and that whatever was to be said of the new 'Blackwood's Magazine,' which had risen with such a shout out of the ashes of the old, this at least could be said no longer, that it was dull or inoffensive--which is of all criticism the most dreadful.
> (1: 117)

The implication of this representation of what was in reality a very local and

individual professional conflict is a threefold reflection on the changes occurring in the early nineteenth-century market place and its determining impact on cultural perceptions of truth and reality. First, the literary market itself emerges to take a place beside the literary product as a self-expressive means by which a man may realise a valued identity, but in the market this process must occur through participation in commodity production. Second, the values defining the individual identity of the man who dominates the market are now perceived to threaten almost immediate supersedence to existing possibilities for identification and value, especially in the case of his defeated rivals. Third, the values and the ideological allegiances that the men of the market declare as self-defining are now accessible to consensual cultural validation through their medium's capture of a majority of consumer votes as they are tallied in circulation statistics. According to Feltes' chronology, this required capacity to produce the reader "by addressing and engaging an infinity of . . . subjects" with a product which itself emerges from the "ensemble of [capitalist] relations [that] structure its production" marks Blackwood's corporate evolution to a "commodity-text" mode of literary capitalism (*Modes* 8-9). Within this structure, "surplus-value . . . is not a straightforward matter of wages, royalties, or profits," but of the futurity inherent to the serialised creation of value itself in and through a large readership's identification with the product's specific manifestation of value (*Modes* 8). The reader, then, is "made by what makes the [product]" (*Modes* 10). *APH*'s account

holds that Blackwood and his ambition for capitalist self-realisation constitute precisely these determining forces.

In order to show how Blackwood effected such a materialisation of his individual identity, I will turn now to the portions of the MS itself that Oliphant includes in *APH*. We will see there how the terms of distinction developed in the editor's self-representation by his simultaneously self-productive brotherhood all refer to the signs of identity and value to be read from the classed male body as it expresses itself into cultural being. As I said I would before the last long quotation, I will begin with the conditions under which the document was produced.

During the brief circulation of *BM*'s precursor, Blackwood had time to consider the requirements of the market in which his literary journal would circulate as an expression of his professional self. Recent expansions of the periodical market had produced a plethora of competitors and Oliphant says that Blackwood knew he needed to distinguish himself within this field of hopefuls with his first "real" number (*APH* 1: 111):

> That it must be a strong number, something to startle the world, a sort of fiery meteor to blaze across the Edinburgh sky and call every man's attention, was the first necessity. [The brotherhood was] determined upon this, whatever else might follow: no longer any calm of respectable mediocrity--something to sting and startle, and make every reader hold his breath. . . . William Blackwood was too sagacious and too completely a man of his world not to know exactly what effect the Chaldee Manuscript would produce. (1: 114-15)

"The brotherhood" was selectively drawn from the elite literary society which had begun meeting in Blackwood's publishing offices. From that club-like assembly the editor chose John Gibson Lockhart, John Wilson, and James Hogg "with others of their allies" to attend him at his house for dinner and many drinks. Their purpose was to determine "how to give a point not to be overlooked to the new issue . . . [and] to combine their immediate business with the greatest possible fun and amusement to themselves" (1: 118). Though Oliphant goes on to note the availability of Lockhart's account of the symposium that followed the high-spirited dinner, a "story" which she says "no doubt is the true one" (1: 119), she offers instead a sourceless mythic sedimentation whose exactitude is uncertain. This very lack, however, allows her to represent the exclusive male environment in which the young men's inception of themselves as (public) men of culture occurs as a professional birthing place rightfully withheld from our commodifying gaze (from materialisation in the market). Such a circumscription seems necessary by virtue of the moment's capacity to reveal the intimately personal mechanisms of literary (self-re)production:

> There is a legend that . . . after dinner, . . . when they had got rid of the ladies, this delightful joke was propounded, and the whole company set to work it out, one after another adding a verse. . . . The sound of the fun as it waxed fast and furious coming in gusts from the dining-room, tantalised and bewildered the ladies above, who could not imagine what was going on; but we are not told that they were taken into the confidence of the rioters. This is a legend which is not perhaps much more to be relied on than if it were a legend of the saints. (1: 118-19)

The effect of this perspective is to leave us as readers with the women, outside the "confiden[tial]" enclosure, listening from a discrete distance as the men produce and name themselves (and each other) into cultural being. Because Oliphant shrouds the process in distance and diffidence, the deliberation behind the eventual identifying effects are lost. The men of letters who emerge seem spontaneously sprung from the professional male community which has drawn itself apart within and also from the domestic realm. The moment's urgency is as much the immanence of Blackwood's empire as it is that of the young men who will 'man' it. In its irrecoverability this moment becomes a mythic process that Oliphant at once repeats and appends to her own myth of industrial and professional genesis.

Like the legend of the saints the *APH*'s author invokes, the "Chaldee MS" produces the identities of its subjects in iconic forms which explain and justify the status conferred by the style and tone of this first volume. The first citation from the MS situates the conflict it narrates within the cultural centre of the British empire, "'in the midst of a great city that looketh toward the north and toward the east, and ruleth over every nation and kindred and tongue that handle the pen of the writer'" (*APH* 1: 119). The MS's narrator then discovers "'in the midst'" of this centre "'a man clothed in plain apparel [who] stood in the door of his house: and I saw his name, and the number of his name; and his name was as it had been the colour of ebony, and his number was as the number of a maiden, when the days of the years of her virginity have expired.'" This very spare description of

Blackwood, we know, was generated under his own supervision. For this reason, it seems safe to assume that it is a highly strategic self-representation whose significations were expected to particularise him within the literary field of entrepreneurial contenders. They must do so in such a way that not only his presence at the centre will be justified but also explained as potentially beneficial to culture and to the literary industry, should the market dominance he bids for here be achieved. Before going on to the potential benefit implied by Blackwood's configuration, however, I want to look at the configuration itself to show the middle-classed nature of the iconic form he promises to embody with the determining power of those who "'ruleth . . . the pen of the writer.'"

The first quality mentioned in Blackwood's professional characterisation in the "Chaldee MS" is the mark of class that precedes all others of his identifying practices, including literal self-expression, into the unspecified extra-domestic space beyond his door. It is borne on the male body that separates the 'beyond' from his domesticated backdrop. That is, as his classed body presents itself at the threshold to the public, the only access to meaning (with respect to the spaces he separates and to the other figures that will emerge) is through him and his self-expressive narrative. The "'plain apparel'" as he bears it before the world denotes his profoundly middle-classed attributes: self-understatement, perceptible openness (plainness), pragmatism, and moderation. Within the market context of the MS's identifying project, "'the man [deliberately self-]clothed'" in such a way

declares himself/his self publicly with his self-defining commitment to the ideological framework within which his plainness possesses and confers value at the same time that it 'stands for' middle-class values possessed (Bourdieu 453-54). Thus he defines himself with his implicit promise to determine access to the interior space from without, and to the exterior from within, across the plainness with which he occupies the threshold.

This classed body, then, fills the doorway ("'stands in the door'") to his house and his individual identification becomes immediately (self-)evident: "'and I saw his name and the number of his name'" (*APH* 1: 119). The sign of 'Blackwood' emerges in a fairly uninspired pun on ebony. However feeble this evocation may be, it does attach connotations of economic value and class status to the name it encodes.[2] The number of this name could be worn before either of his houses: his residence at 53 Queen Street or his publishing offices at 17 Princes Street. At least partly to avoid speculating about which age represents virginity's expiration, I would argue that the ambiguity allows Blackwood to be perceived as rightfully determining access to either or both of the domains (private and/or public) that constitute "'his house.'"

Blackwood's signifying male body speaks his professional and personal identity (as well as its rightful territory) into the public domain of the MS's circulation and into the doorway's 'beyond.' It defines his role, promises his value(s), and, perhaps most importantly to the market for whose control the classes

were in contention, demonstrates the potential of his classed conservatism to stand for (to become an icon of) entrepreneurial viability. Even further, the ideological alignment that he bodies forth underwrites and sanctifies the gatekeeper determinations that his post at the threshold requires and by which it defines itself.

With Blackwood described and in place, figures begin to emerge from the 'beyond' to present themselves to him and receive their meaning according to their difference from the iconic standard he represents. Whereas Blackwood's body tells all as it "'stands in the door of his house'" and tells it plainly, the "'two beasts [who] came from the lands of the borders of the South,'" namely Pringle and Cleghorn, fail to present an authentically self-representative substance in the MS:

> "The one beast was like a lamb, and the other like a bear; and they had wings on their heads: their faces also were like the faces of men, the joints of their legs like the polished cedars of Lebanon, and their feet like the feet of horses preparing to go to battle: and they arose and they came onward over the face of the earth, and they touched not the ground as they went." (*APH* 1: 119-20)

Throughout this passage, Pringle and Cleghorn are portrayed as only "'like'" their descriptive analogues without ever actually embodying any form of specifiable being. This elusive physicality informs the MS's subsequent narration of the pair's equally illusory business promises to the plain man:

> "And they proffered him a Book; and they said unto him, Take thou this and give us a sum of money, that we may eat and drink and our souls may live.
>
> And we will put words into the Book that will astonish the children of thy people; and it shall be a light unto thy feet and a lamp unto thy path; it shall also bring bread unto thy household and a

> portion to thy maidens. . . .
>
> But after many days they put no words in the Book; and the man was astonished and waxed wroth, and he said unto them, What is this that ye have done unto me, and how shall I answer those to whom I am engaged? And they said, What is that to us? see thou to that." (1: 120)

The thrust of this depiction focuses on the men's avaricious literary inadequacy as the only knowable fixture of their characters. However, I must point out that it is not their offer to exchange intellectual labour for subsistence which gives rise to their negative portrayals. The terms of their submission to Blackwood indicates their willing alienation within the known conditions of the capitalist system. Their failure, rather, is the prevention of Blackwood's transformation of a commodity-book into a commodity-text. This idea is implict in their refusal to fulfill their contractual promises of surplus-value far beyond 'mere profit': professional futurity, shaped audience, enlightened distinction, and heritable estate. In Feltes' words, they renege on their contract to produce a "discrete, . . . written text . . . of a determinate length, produced regularly, and to be collected, complete, in a stated time[,] . . . a segment of a larger serial issue" (*Modes* 13). Instead, they take the immediate money and run. For this reason, I would argue, they possess no marks of class, only monstrously composite pretensions to capitalist competition. They are "'like . . . horses preparing to go to battle'" but they never enter the fray (*APH* 1: 120). The degree to which they fail to achieve fixed and substantial specificity, then, is precisely commensurate with

the degree to which they fail, and even obstruct, Blackwood's self-productive commodification of literature. This is to say, it would seem, that they amount to nothing, to nobody, with any truth. The same cannot be said for the MS's "picture of the rival power, Constable . . . long before this time known as 'the Crafty' among these wild young Tories" (*APH* 1: 121).

Unlike Pringle and Cleghorn, Constable appears in the MS's pages as a human and not a beast:

> "And I beheld the man, and he was comely and well-favoured, and he had a notable horn in his forehead [identified by Oliphant as *ER* (1: 98)] with which he ruled the nations.
>
> And I saw the horn that it had eyes, and a mouth speaking great things, and it magnified itself even to the Prince of the host [Blackwood in Princes Street], and it cast down the truth to the ground, and it practised and prospered.
>
> And when this man saw the Book, and beheld the things that were in the Book, he was troubled in spirit and much cast down.
>
> And he said unto himself, 'Why stand I idle here, and why do I not bestir myself?--lo! This Book shall become a devouring sword in the hand of mine adversary, and with it will he root up or loosen the horn that is in my forehead, and the hope of my gains shall perish from the face of the earth.'" (*APH* 1: 121)

Though Constable's introductory description says that he "'was an upright and a just man, one who feared God and eschewed evil,'" his association with the Book of Revelation's horned beasts of Satan makes his righteousness seem the beguiling pose of the false prophet. More important than Constable's specific analogue, however, is the implication of the MS's evocation of Revelations itself. The signs of that biblical vision foretell an apocalypse in which the beasts worked not for the

"better things to come" of Blackwood's dream (1: 24), but for mankind's perpetual enslavement to established evil. Since "'the Book'" of Blackwood represents the greatest danger to this horned agent of falsehood, we may understand that it is the editor's conversion of the system of literary production that will "'root up . . . the horn . . . in [his] forehead" and preclude "'the hope of [his petty-commodity] gains'" (1:121). Indeed, Constable's resistance to the commodity-text's deferral of surplus-value suggests a concomitant refusal of the middle class's defining virtue of delayed gratification. Unlike Blackwood, then, the rival editor's possession of upright qualities does not mark a professionalised body with guarantors of truth (of self). Instead he is only a face that is demonstrably "'*crafty* in counsel and cunning in all manner of working'" his rule upon the nation through his speaking horn. This productive appendage, in fact, is accredited with a greater physical presence than its bearer, who also lacks its specificity of features. As well, the horn is the only source of Constable's economic subsistence, or his material identity ("'the hope of [his] gains'"). In effect, the horn wields Constable who serves his own highly mercenary interests by defending its determining penetration of his head from Blackwood's self-productive Book. The new rival's "'devouring sword'" of transformed commodity production will supplant the materialising potential of competing self-producers with Blackwood's own market(able) dominance.

Though Constable is portrayed here as a man, the avowed self-fulness of

his ambition for money and cultural power are suggested to produce, or perhaps to be produced by, the same sort of inadequately specific male body that I have shown informing the characterisations of Pringle and Cleghorn. These three representations are the only ones that Oliphant includes in her MS samples which bear human features. This divergently-ascribed humanity encodes the identities of those who possess (however temporarily) the power to determine both the fact and the nature of other literary men's self-expressive circulation. Such an idea indicates the Blackwood brotherhood's strategic resource to a hierarchy of literary being. According to this measure, the manifestation of cultural power through market presence is also the bodying forth of knowable masculine humanity. This humanity, in turn, may be hierarchised according to the degree to which it is composite. Blackwood alone is fully and solely human. Pringle and Cleghorn have faces like men, but composite, monstrous bodies. Constable has only a human head and the animated horn, so that he seems rather a mythically monstrous compilation as well. When Blackwood's founding cadre turns to the representation of themselves as they "'come forth for the service of the man in plain apparel,'" they select animal forms but describe them in terms of unadulterated integrity.

Wilson, Lockhart, and Hogg write themselves into Blackwood's genesis as, respectively, a leopard, a scorpion, and a boar:

> "The first that came was the beautiful leopard . . . whose

> going forth was comely as the greyhound, and his eyes like the lightning of fiery flame.
>
> And he called . . . the scorpion, which delighteth to sting the faces of men, that he might sting sorely the countenance of the man that is crafty, and of the two beasts.
>
> And he brought down the great wild boar from the forest . . . and he roused up his spirits, and I saw him whetting his dreadful tusks for the battle." (*APH* 1: 123)

Though Oliphant says "the writers did not spare [even] themselves" in their satiric portrayal of Blackwood's professional struggle to establish himself and their own roles in it, each man's choice of a self-representative figure allows him to embody a coherently-signified and -classed threat to the motley crew of rival signifiers.

Wilson, as "'the beautiful leopard,'" claims a body proverbially incapable of manifesting any but its own marks of 'natural' identity. Such an association claims for Wilson this same helpless stability of signifying self-embodiment. It also evokes the animal's inherent elegance, grace, and predatorial superiority. His further comparison to the "'comely . . . greyhound'"(*APH* 1: 123), an animal which traditionally constituted the leashed threat of the sporting nobility, confirms the previous intimations of upper-class identity at the same time that it obliquely elevates Blackwood, who calls him to the market hunt.

Lockhart's scorpion-body is less clearly evocative of his known upper-class origins than Wilson's figure is, but its signification is of a far more delicately lethal nature than that of his more muscular companion. The fatal potential of this second beast derives from its constitutive production and precise administration of

the venom with which "'it delighteth to sting the faces of men.'" Earlier I proposed that the human "'countenances'" of the previously composed figures may distinguish them as men of power. If this is so, then the Scorpion's preference for facial targets indicates his self-expressive intention towards these publicly-born marks of power. It signifies his potential for pleasurable self-abandonment to the deadly delicacy that I now argue is also the upper class-specification of the nature he embodies in the MS. He acquires the capacity to discriminate appropriate victims only when he submits himself to "the service of the man clothed in plain apparel" and his self-productive market project. Such a submission to the circumscribing influence of a middle class power is the only way he can express himself truly with any certainty of (however selectively ensured) safety.

Hogg, not surprisingly, claims the form of the "'the great wild boar'" and, implicitly, that animal's (lower-classed) associations with brute force and passionate ("'roused . . . spirit'") confrontation. The contained foreboding that reflects the upper classed threat of the previous pair is completely lacking in Hogg's self-representation. His danger is the "'great . . . boar's'" identifying capacity to embody, in an always potentially excessive way, the aggressive expression of his classed nature as he rallies to the defence of Blackwood's house. His vulnerability is the traditional association of the boar with the soical elite.

It might be argued, as Oliphant does, that these are "not flattering" self-productions (*APH* 1: 123), but I would suggest that the very unorthodox nature of

their identifying choices produces part of the MS's cultural and commercial intelligibility (Bourdieu 479). That is, Blackwood's "'beasts'" displace traditional mythic signifiers in favour of their own equally legible forms of particularised threat. Such a displacement implicitly initiates the possibility for a whole new set of mythically-informed (professional) icons that declares and demonstrates the advantage of classed male self-embodiment within the market. It does so by encoding the men's personal intentions and potential for professional dominance of the field as embodiable signs of their controlled service of middle class values and by deploying the attributes of that classed identity as the defensive and offensive means of ascendancy. This aggressive appropriation, then, of the power of self-expressive determination, rather than the romantic appeal whose lack Oliphant laments, is the object of the MS's mythic encodement of new iconic models for the realisation of male identities within a changing cultural and literary market. The task of finding the "romantic and picturesque" in the power players and their incursion into the Republic of Letters falls to Oliphant (*APH* 1: 181). Accordingly, she rewrites Blackwood's entrepreneurial striving at the head of his "'host'" (*APH* 1:121) as a mythically-accessible bildungsroman which is similarly legible upon the marketed male bodies only as they fulfill their promise to dominate the site of their resignifying circulation.

At the end of her account of 'the brotherhood's' self-productive revelry and its almost immediate conversion into print, Oliphant portrays Blackwood suffering

the pangs and euphoria of imminence:

> the man in plain apparel for a moment had the scene all to himself. He received the new number, fresh and fragrant from the press . . . with his heart beating in his ears. Did it mean fortune and success? or did it mean something very different? But he did not allow himself to dwell on that dark chance. . . . And then he walked home in the keen evening air--with perhaps that touch of coming frost which was exhilarating as generous wine to the vigorous and healthful man at the height of his manhood--with the precious little packet under his arm. (*APH* 1: 126-27)

The birth Blackwood attends, here, "at the height of his manhood" is that of his own professional being as he has (self-)expressed it. Thus, the "vision of better things to come [that Oliphant says] irradiated the dustiness of the old" modes of literary production when Blackwood first undertook his self-making (1: 24) is about to be materialised through his incursive commodification of a highly masculine and iconically middle-class self. As I suggested would be the case in an earlier discussion about the peripheral role of Blackwood's domestic world in this account of his professional life, the excited father-(of ascendant self)-to-be returns home. There, he presents the material effects of his determining public toils ("his precious little packet" of expressed self) to the one who will also be determined by them, his wife:

> He went into his house, where all the children--by this time a nursery full--rushed out with clamour and glee to meet their father, who for once, in his excitement, took no notice of them, but walked straight to the drawing-room, where his wife, not excitable, sat in her household place, busy no doubt for her fine family; and, coming in to the warm glow of the light, threw down the precious Magazine at her feet. "There is that that will give you your due--what I always

> wished you to have," he said, with the half-sobbing laugh of the great crisis. (1: 127)

The editor's dramatic presentation to his wife consists at least partly of the economic potential for social mobility inherent to his public self-expression. Since Blackwood himself says, or so Oliphant allows us to believe with her unqualified citation, that it was the bestowal upon Mrs. Blackwood of "her due"(1: 127), I infer that it is also her reception from him of the possibility for her true and truly self-reflective class identity to be realised in a domestic version of "'the [identifying] service'" of the three beasts (1: 123). Even further, his act of bestowal implies that her identity will acquire social meaning and value to a degree precisely commensurate with the cultural value of Blackwood's self-made professional manhood. Any domestic romance worth its Victorian salt would be proud of such a 'happy ending.' Oliphant's easy transubstantiation, here, of the mythic male quest for professional self-realisation into a conventionalised domestic tale which culminates in the ascendant effect of that project's success takes account of the determining importance of the individual(ised) literary entrepreneur to the future deployment of the cultural and social significations by which he has defined and valued himself. They become available as highly stable cultural and literary signifiers of an authentically occupied and justifiably determining identity.

* * *

By portraying William Blackwood as the determining centre of a critical and transformational confluence of mythologies, Oliphant imbues his professional struggles and the periodical industry itself with a dignity and heroic tradition precluded in the pre-capitalist mind by any association with Trade. Her "complete description of [Blackwood's] position" at the centre of culture also provides, "an (implicitly normative) description of those who are predisposed to succeed" or, "more precisely, a description of the mediations through which [class] dispositions linked to trajectories are adjusted to these positions"(Bourdieu 358). This manoeuvre also invokes and demonstrates the productive male body's role in the negotiation of meaningful market and cultural being. At the same time this construction plots access to valued identity through the determining commodification that Oliphant describes (and of which she retroactively confirms the enduring truth) in *APH*. It is, in fact, the very process Blackwood initiated with his alienating appropriation of the brotherhood's rebellious production of themselves to his own entrepreneurial production of an individualised middle-class self in the "Chaldee MS". The representational language of both documents shows how the marketed literary body continues to be available for deployment within traditionally resonant schemes of signification. These schemes can and will determine both the meaning and the value of the classed identity expressed by the productive body, as well as the identity of the one who commands production.

According to these related explicatory schemes, Blackwood's increasing

market presence and command not only potentiate the masculine (cultural) substance of his literary dependents' productive beings, but also confirms his own, dedicated as it is to the conquering dissemination of his ascendant middle-class truth of (valued) self. That is, within the emergent capitalism of the early nineteenth century's system of literary production, Blackwood is assured of material and cultural ascendancy at the moment that he establishes his market viability with his contributors' controlled literary production of themselves. Feltes calls it the "appropriation of labor-power as fixed capital" (*Modes* 61), but 'capital' here connotes both economic and cultural value. Conversely, then, the periodical market also emerges as an acceptable site for the production of valued forms of manhood. This is particularly so when the public expression of that masculinity reflects the (self-)productive independence necessary to the critical (re)vision of literary and political culture that Blackwood desired and facilitated in the oppositional work of his paper's early years. Indeed, it is the moment of revision that I have argued he signified with his portentous self-making. In Oliphant's *APH*, as in Blackwood's "Chaldee MS", ambitious entreprenuerialism becomes mythically heroic. It also becomes, like Jeffrey's establishment of the *ER*, "the most romantic [of] episodes [in] literary history" (*APH* 1: 96). In its telling, Blackwood's struggles to command the market place are transformed into overlapping and interdependent projects of necessary redemption--of the family name and fortune, of the "idle young men", of the Republic of Letters (as it

undergoes the threat of reproduction in the upper class-image of its excessive constituents), and of culture itself (as it is determined by the men of Letters). Thus, Oliphant rhetorically reduces the market, whose sales-determined caste system elects the Republic's governing body, to a field across which literary contenders face one another with competing (self-) expressions of cultural value(s) and disavowed economic self-interest. As I have indicated, however, a man of the market can uphold such a disavowal only if his acquisition of surplus value is derived from the commodity-text's perpetual deferral of profit closure (Feltes *Modes* 10-11). Blackwood's project has ever been his potential readership, the unarrivable futurity of his enterprise. For this reason, the relations inhering to Blackwood's adaptation of the mode in which periodical literature itself was being produced, and not just that of the serialised fiction that Feltes says occurred much later, identifies the early nineteenth-century capitalist as one of the first to take this "*specific form of control* [series production] over the labor process so as to produce surplus value"(*Modes* 3).

The attribute that Oliphant points to most often as distinguishing the writers of this early period from those of her own time is a disdainful (or at the very least indifferent) demeanour towards the material value of intellectual labour. At an early point in *APH* she writes,

> In those days it was considered right at all events to say, and if possible to believe, that literature was superior to payment, and that to imagine a man of genius as capable of being stirred up to

> composition by any thought of pecuniary reward was an insulting and degrading suggestion--an idea in which a fanciful spectator would fain take refuge once more, in face of a generation which weighs out its thousand words across the counter, with the affectation of finding in sale and barter its only motive. (1: 99)

This passage suggests the conditions under which Blackwood experiences a very different valuation, first, from authors for his attentiveness (as an orthodox producer of culture) towards what is clearly his own stake in the market, and second, from the type of publishers whose sole concern is immediate profit. Blackwood's watchful determinations are constructed throughout *APH* as two necessary mediations. First, of the potentially corruptive economic domain in order to preserve the author's valuing posture of naive disinterestedness in the material effects of his self-expression. And second, of that domain's access to a highly vulnerable cultural realm in order to safeguard against the always threatening excesses of self by which Oliphant identifies Lockhart's and Wilson's belonging to the usual class of the intellectual man of letters in Blackwood's day. Her language portrays his interests as being so integral to those of the author that submission to his economic and cultural agenda was not only identical to, but, in fact, simultaneous with the author's realisation of his own professional ambitions. She suggests this by creating an anecdotal domestic backdrop in which the Blackwood family's smooth social and cultural ascent is underwritten by William's foregrounded professional production of literary 'names'. That is, in order for the writer to be able to claim a valued (and classed) status for his

professional production of himself, Blackwood must mediate knowledge of the market's operation. The signs of his successful comprehension are manifested by the material marks of his family's social ascent.

* * *

One "literary personage [created] by the agency of the Magazine" (*APH* 1:184) was John Lockhart and I will, like Oliphant, "put [him] before the reader" because he was a "very active member of the brotherhood--the one whose exertions had the greatest influence upon the new Magazine" (1: 181). By the time he became a member of the brotherhood, he had already published a translation of *Schlegel's Lectures on the History of Literature* as an outgrowth of his training in linguistics, "an elegant accomplishment rather than a necessity of education in his day" (1: 184). Oliphant also notes that he had "'come of kent folk,'--an advantage always of the greatest importance both to a man's character and his fortune" and that he had been a "Snell scholar[, a type of academic who] has almost always been distinguished, and every generation of them has produced notable members, to the embellishment of their second home of learning, and the great honour and glory of the first" (1: 182). These antecedents credit him only with the ambitious potential for self-production as an intellectual notable. He has neither the material resources by which he could subsist while he realised his (classed) promise nor the access to the market in which he can (and must) substantiate his successful fulfilment with the economic mark of culture's

(consuming) welcome to the fold. Oliphant suggests Blackwood's material support of the needy aspirant as being motivated by his intuitive discrimination of the value potential inherent to both the producer and his product and as the editor's unconscious establishment of the capitalist relations from which both would benefit: "evidently from the first [Blackwood] had believed in the youth, and . . . lent, or it would be more true to say gave, a sum . . . to the young literary adventurer, for which he received [the] translation. . . . The book seems to have done well enough . . . but this act of liberality and confidence must have been a powerful retaining fee," or, as she phrases it shortly afterwards, "bond to the publisher's service" (1:185).

In his capacity as Blackwood's bondsman and literary adventurer, Lockhart was able to submit his MSS to the publisher's management and avoid implication in the trade aspect of his products' processing for consumption. However, Oliphant reprints a letter in the chapter devoted to him that reveals his awareness of the trade's operations and potential for material and cultural accreditation:

> "I think you will not accuse me of any impropriety when I say that the enclosed Essay has cost me a great deal of time and thought, and that if it be printed in the Magazine I shall consider myself entitled to be paid for it upon quite a different footing than from usual articles.
>
> I am of opinion that such a view of such a subject would at this particular time attract great notice even in the highest quarters; and really that important practical results might follow." (1: 225-26)

Blackwood's response to this missive confirms that Lockhart's knowing reference

is not only to the possibility of his cultural influence (towards change) but also to the other "practical results" of income and the mutual benefit inherent in *BM*'s promotion:

> "I am quite aware that the article you were so good as to send me was the result of knowledge and experience which few possessed, and that therefore anything I could offer in the shape of money was not adequate to its intrinsic worth. I felt proud in receiving the article, as a mark of friendship to myself as well as of the deep interest you continued to take in my Magazine, and I trusted that by means of it . . . the work would receive such an impulse that I should very soon have it in my power to show you substantially that I was not insensible of what you had done for me. . . . To pay you, as I have already said, I could not; but I flattered myself that, independent of the interest you take in my Magazine, its very success would prompt you to write articles when you did not feel inclined to do anything else." (1: 226-27)

Although Oliphant offers this insight into Lockhart's professional relations with Blackwood as a gesture towards her comprehensive truth of representation,[3] her emphasis throughout is ultimately upon those attributes I mentioned above. They define him in terms of the early nineteenth century's romantically-heroic ideal of the young man of letters. He is of the leisured class, rebelliously and impulsively playful, and extreme in expression. As she pointed out when she first described Lockhart's involvement in *BM*'s opening cultural salvo, however, this very extremity (of class, of irreverence, and of self-assertion) was integral to the subject's recognition as that heroic ideal:

> The decks were now cleared, the men were at their posts: the real battle was about to begin. . . . Lockhart, pensive and serious, almost melancholy, in the fiery fever of satire and ridicule that

> possessed him, launching his javelin with a certain pleasure in the mischief as well as the most perfect self-abandonment to the impulse of the moment. . . . [There was to be] no longer any calm of respectable mediocrity. (*APH* 1: 114-15)

She also makes it clear throughout that Lockhart's simultaneous submission to Blackwood enabled not only his identifying posture of economic disinterestedness, threat of extremity, and creative possession, but also the productive and expressive stability by which such a construction of the man of letters acquired market viability and cultural substance as a valuable manifestation of manhood. This 'making' of his name under Blackwood's middle-class aegis is an indicator of the reciprocity of self-productive potential between the private/personal sphere in which individual attributes determine authorial expression and that of the public/professional where the expression is materially sanctioned by its paid circulation as a representation of both the author's and periodical's distinctive point of view. From and during this time, Lockhart's career fulfilled the promise of cultural and social ascendancy that was guaranteed by his professional potential to produce himself as literary hero: he married into the literary royalty (Walter Scott's daughter); he became a sort of chamberlain to the sovereign himself in his declining years and a posthumous guardian of the royal chronicles; he became a 'maker of names' in his own right as the eventual editor of the *Quarterly Review*.

Another member of the brotherhood, though not of the founding cadre, offers a contrasting possibility for the self-productive potential of the relationship

between Blackwood as the editor of a prominent periodical and an author as his supplier of cultural goods. Oliphant's construction of William Maginn, an Irish journalist, invokes many of the same categories and methods of identificatory signification that Lockhart's does--class, affiliative authenticity, authorial posture, attributional prognostication--but his is not the hero's tale. That is, while his characterisation renders him as much 'a writerly type' as Lockhart's does and, consequently, just as amenable to mythic inscription, Oliphant's depiction of Maginn does not incorporate the positive classical or biblical resonances of the other figures. This absence emerges as an indicator of the cultural substance that Maginn would fail to achieve from his role in *BM*'s "mythic period, the heroic age of its history" (*APH* 1: 179). The cause of this failure turns out to be Maginn's ultimately inherent inability to authenticate his 'fit' within the defining class of Blackwood's stable. While the ambition to realise an ascendant self is clearly one of the motives of the other characters developed in *APH,* in Maginn's case this ambition is not subsumed by his determination as cultural servitor. Instead, Oliphant portrays him as wholly determined by the middle-class values he cannot embody within the realising potential of the literary market place. He cannot by virtue (or by lack of virtue) of the self-fullness of the interests he serves there. As with Lockhart, his productive body is implicated in this process of self-expressive commodification, but here the body is never transcended by the cultural substance its labour has made possible. For the first time Oliphant shows how such 'a type'

of self-serving ambition materialises the body of the literary producer within the market as promiscuously available, a feminising effect of corporeal excess that will preclude enduring substantiation within an identity of value.

Maginn was welcomed as a contributor to *BM* in 1820 on the basis of his capacity to express his likeness to the members of the brotherhood in his exchanges with Blackwood and the public, as John Wilson observes in an early letter to him:

> "The short things you have had the kindness to send afford sufficient proof that your talents and accomplishments are great and varied. Your ways of thinking, too, on all important subjects, seem to harmonise as well as possible with that, in the spirit of which the greater part of the Magazine always has been written. In short, there is no question you can, if you choose, be of more use to me, and it, than any one with whom we have casually become acquainted. . . . I earnestly hope [these articles] may pave the way for a more close connection with a gentleman for whose talents, acquirements, and principles I entertain the highest respect." (*APH* 1:365)

His emergence coincides with one of the many litigational fracases that erupted periodically over *BM*'s extreme and often personal (though equally often imagined) attacks on both rival stables of contributors and freelance writers. Initial communications and submissions to Blackwood from Maginn were anonymous, but his brilliantly witty critical confirmations of the magazine's positions in *BM* and elsewhere quickly endeared this unknown supporter to the editor's heart, as did his counsel in the legal wrangling that arose as a consequence. He advised Blackwood to adopt a demeanour of aloof indifference

toward many of the litigators on the basis of inside financial information and assessments of affiliational strength--or lack thereof. Consequently, he profoundly bolstered the editor's strategic resources with respect to the industry's and the court's effective responses.

Although Oliphant affirms his staunch literary support of the beleaguered editor, she also indicates that his conformity to the gentlemanly ideal of (classed) literary self-production merely disguised his dedicated service to his own interests. By construing it as such, she bears out Bourdieu's point about "[p]retension, the recognition of distinction that is affirmed in the effort [for] possess[ion], . . . in itself vulgarizing, of the previously most distinctive properties" (257). On the occasion of his "bringing Mr Blackwood into a libel case while still he had scarcely settled into his seat as one of the staff of the Magazine" (*APH* 1: 368), she summarises his rallying cry to the editor as little more than cowardly self-protection. She says that Maginn's reply to Blackwood's appeal to "his honourable feelings[,] as to the most advisable course which ought to be taken in order to show decidedly and distinctly that Mr L. is not the author of any of these articles,"

> has much of the coolness of the man who, being entirely out of harm's way, and free from any possibility of even social annoyance, keeps his head, and perceives all that is excessive in the agitation of his friend who is in the middle of the fray. . . . Maginn does not seem to see that . . . his true name, whether, as the newspapers say, for publication or otherwise, would have given at least a certain consolation. It is curious that in the face of the danger, pecuniary

> and other, which Blackwood was thus involved in by his act, the active agent of the mischief remains discreetly behind his shield, too prudent to sign himself as anything more distinct than R. T. S. The most reckless even of gay Irishmen can be reticent when need is.
> (*APH* 1: 370-73)

Even in the appreciative descriptions of his affiliative labours, Maginn is an inevitable outsider by virtue of the defining attributes of his "natural [social and cultural] sphere" (*APH* 1: 364). They preindicated, had his self-expressions only been authentically indicative of himself, his ultimate incapacity to fulfill the promise of his professed identity's ascendant trajectory:

> He had begun life as a schoolmaster in Cork, and was a man of considerable learning as well as much wit, ready as his countrymen have always been in felicitous speech, and full of the boundless fun and frolic with which they have been credited, whether justly or not, since light literature began. He was indeed one of the best specimens of the typical Irishman, the crystallised Paddy, ready to jest and sing, to speechify, to fight, to flatter, to make promises and to break them, with all the unstable charm of being beyond rule, guided by his impulses, and following them to much enjoyment and renown for a time, but soon into ruin and dismay. He seems to have dropped into the Blackwood band . . . as accidentally as he did most other things, without . . . either introduction or guarantee, without even a name or local habitation, a mere collocation of initials, dating from a public news-room. The initials were not even his own.
> (*APH* 1: 364-65)

The attributes that come "naturally" to Maginn as an Irishman seem identical to those which authenticated Lockhart's potentiating fit in the brotherhood, but here they signify belonging quite falsely. Even his assumed designation, as Oliphant points out, does not refer to anything of distinctive value in the literary profession. It is only the marketed sign of a lower periodical caste which enables its

pretentious referent to impose himself upon his literary superiors. She also says that this "extraordinary power of adapting himself to the requirements of a world so different from his own" was as inherent to his character as his instability and excess (*APH* 1: 364). It is a "bluff . . . of legitimacy" which fails to facilitate "escap[e from] the limits of social conditions" (Bourdieu 253). Whereas the stories of potential literary self that the identical attributes told about Lockhart and Wilson are truly representative of the high cultural value ascribed to their mythic analogues, Maginn's 'type' is only a being of "light literature." Implicit in this reduction to a genre, especially to one that we will see in the next chapter as particularly informed in its production by the market place, is the devaluing premise of Maginn's failure to authenticate his belonging. He is not an individualisable member of the elite republic, but a caricatural imposter whose generic resemblance facilitates his believable simulation of the originals with all their promise of value(s) (Bourdieu 363). At the same time this defining extremity ensures his eventual repudiation for his (similarly definitive) failure to keep his easily assumed promise.

In Oliphant's account, this 'facility' eventually becomes a capacity for apostasy. A letter from Samuel Warren to William Blackwood and Oliphant's response to it illustrates the slippage:

> "One of the *literati* whom I met at dinner, a man from whom I should have expected better things, prefaced his application to me [for submissions] by speaking in the most shameful way of both you

> and Wilson. You would be astonished to know his name! He said, 'Mr Blackwood will help you and treat you civilly as long as it suits his purpose, but when he has done with you he will neglect you and treat you ill!!! *Crede experto*,' said he. 'Now Mr Warren, in *our* Magazine, &c., &c., &c.!!!' I have declined to have anything to do with him."
>
> This personage was no doubt the ubiquitous and unblushing Maginn, . . . who was exerting all his shifty and wayward energies in building up 'Fraser's Magazine' upon those same insecure and moving sands which Blackwood had only by enormous stress of genius and good luck found a footing upon. Warren, however, for one, was anxious to make his absolute superiority to all temptation manifest. (*APH* 2: 37-38)

She authorises this assessment with an evaluation by the generation of editors soon to succeed William at the head of Maga: "The Preface is a host in itself . . . and I was almost crying with vexation at the Doctor [Maginn's brotherhood pseudonym] who could write such a thing prostituting his talents as he has been doing" (2: 55). Oliphant's introductory comment in the chapter devoted to Maginn, to the effect that "[h]e was not a bad man . . . but so spoilt and hampered by other qualities that every promise ended in the mean and squalid misery of a nature fallen, fallen, fallen from its high estate" (1: 363), resonates, here, with the "host" of valued identities that he willingly expresses only to place on the block:

> He wrote for the 'John Bull' and other papers, selling his praise or his censure as it might be wanted, until both ceased to be of any value. He became a hurried, irregular, and harassed journalist, irregular in life [Maginn was a serious drinker, if not an alcoholic] as well as in his profession, carrying the light-hearted satire and fun of his youth into servility and miserable personal abuse. He became the great prop of 'Fraser's Magazine' when established, and there set up an imitated 'Noctes' [a series of critical commentaries on literature and society that made a huge 'hit' in *BM*] and Symposia of various

> kinds, written with ease and ever a more reckless and flying pen, and less regard (he had never shown much) to decency and good manners. (1:404)

Oliphant's reiterated association of the writer's "gradually accomplished downfall" with the indiscriminate (and ultimately nondiscriminating) sale of his intellectual favours and with the self-indulgence of his physical excesses eventually represents him as completely unworthy of enduring literary substance (canonisation) in his own prostituted person. That is, the manly name 'made' (with promises of value) under Blackwood's respectable aegis is desubstantiated in his subsequent (and helpless) professional expression of his 'true' self. His interested 'type' of self-realisation can materialise only a commodified, feminised body that Oliphant suggests is the symptom and effect of his refusal to be determined by Blackwood's self-expressive middle-class cultural project:

> the ever-indefatigable Maginn, after all his adventures, and they had been innumerable, [came] back once more to his original supporters. He had set himself up against Blackwood: he had copied and travestied and reviled these ancient friends . . . It had come down to a matter of "getting five pounds from me," which a kind-hearted young publisher with the spectacle of this broken and fallen man of letters before him had not the courage to refuse. (*APH* 2: 281)

Despite the similarities in Lockhart's and Maginn's careers--both found eminence under Blackwood's masthead and used it to fulfill their literary ambitions in rival camps--the posterity that Oliphant affords each of them in *APH* is extremely divergent. On the one hand, she portrays Lockhart as maturing quite naturally and beneficially into a respectable peer of the Republic whose honorable

rivalry at the head of another periodical seems to have only a favourable effect on the personal, professional, and market prospects of the Blackwoods' enterprise and on culture itself. He removed himself from literary production for the firm when his stylistic obsolescence began to make him only marginally marketable; he maintained affectionate and intimate, if somewhat sporadic, contact with the family for the rest of his life; he went on to use his name's cachet and authority to expand the literary market itself. His Maga-style review offered authoritative explications and evaluations of the publishing industry's operations and products. In addition, he published apparently objective critical notices of *BM*'s contents and of their other publishing ventures.

On the other hand, Oliphant depicts Maginn as evolving equally naturally into a degenerately feminine apostate. His public denigration of the Blackwood name as a method of consolidating his own importance first to *QR* and then to *Fraser's* ultimately justifies his embodied exclusion from the kind of cultural substantiation *APH* provides for the other members of the brotherhood:

> [w]e are by no means proud of the part Maginn took in the Magazine, nor of himself . . . and to place him [in *APH*] immediately after the Great Twin Brethren [Lockhart and Wilson] who formed it is too honourable a place . . . and his history, never written at any length or deserving to be so, is full of the tragic contrast--so often, alas! to be found in the lives of self-ruined men--of brilliant and careless youth and a maturity miserable and shameful. (1: 363)

It seems evident that Oliphant has included Maginn's name in Blackwoods' book of cultural and literary life for the sole purpose of striking it out. The trajectory of

his interested self-realisation within the literary market is not into cultural substance, but into merited oblivion.

Whereas Oliphant marks the end of Lockhart's work for Maga (which is almost simultaneous with Maginn's) by denoting its term "the mythic period, the heroic age of [*BM*'s] history" (*APH* 1: 179) and then shows him passing from this mythic determination into cultural determinacy, she describes Maginn's "fall" from what turns out to have been "the best specimen" of his othered and classed literary type of manhood (1: 364) into a degenerate embodiment of feminised marketability. His final anecdotal presence *in APH* does not leave us with Maginn-as-prostituted-spectacle, however, but with John Blackwood's charitable response to the domestic effects of Maginn's equally identifying excesses:

> "The night before last Mrs Maginn called with the commencement of two novels, which I now send you. . . . [S]he asked for money in advance upon them. I offered her a cheque for L10, when she said, with her Irish sort of tone, that she had her little school bill for L25 which she must pay. Like a fool I changed the cheque to that amount. We have, however, tolerable sort of security, and I did not know how to escape, for she seemed to have got orders not to leave them without some tin. I am glad to see her looking so well after all she must have been through." (2: 282)

Oliphant's first volume account of Blackwood's self-establishment in *APH* sets out the conditions and implications for professional men of literature of their determinately-valued embodiment within the public domain of culture's reproduction (the market place). According to the conditions that she develops with her mythic narrative of iconic self-production, management of the body as it

expresses its 'natural' attributes within the self-realising possibilities of the market's capitalist relations relies on that body's capacity to commodify its submission to specifically middle-classed values. "Attributes, in the sense of predicates, thereby become *attributions* . . . [of every] holder of the post" (Bourdieu 480). When this self-representation is truly successful (which is also to say when it is 'truly' self-representative), Oliphant suggests, the fulfilled potential for public self-embodiment is identical to and simultaneous with the achievement of material (economic) identity. As I have also tried to indicate, however, the fact of materialisation alone (in terms of both literary self-expression and economic acquisition) is insufficient to ensure the subject's cultural substantiation of worthwhile identity assumption. In the next chapter, I will show that such reactive accreditation also depends upon the generic nature of the materialisation and upon whether the materiality achieved implicates or effaces the classed body of a male or female self-producer.

Notes

1. Ina Ferris dates the Republic's inception to "the eighteenth century . . . [when] leadership of the republic . . . shifted from merchant publishers and scholar-printers to the editors of literary reviews. But neither the leadership nor the status was established once and for all, and by 1802 in Britain the whole practice had lost caste. The reviews generally had been moved out of the literary into the commercial sphere, which stood in antithetical relation to it in culture" (*The Achievement of Literary Authority* 20). From this assessment it seems likely that part of Blackwood's struggle would also have been dedicated to his journal's association with cultural rather than economic production.

2. Charcoal, for instance, would have worked equally well as a bad pun for Blackwood, but the deliberate association of the editor with ebony, as well as with all of its social and cultural significance--its rarity; its capacity to be easily distinguished from other materials; its exclusivity; and its related ability to confer distinction on its possessor--serve the referent's need for identifying value far better than would charcoal as a universal subsistence requirement.

3. Unpublished correspondence between Oliphant and William's successors reveals that disclosure of these pecuniary negotiations came very close to being perceived as a breach of discretion. In 1896 Oliphant writes,

> both Lockhart's and Wilson's letters portray their characters and their dealings with your grandfather so very clearly and graphically that the traditional reticence of your house may feel implicated. Still there is so much dramatic interest gained, and so little lost on either side by their revelation that I think they should be retained. . . . I have kept out all money transactions except the interesting general discussions with Lockhart. (MS 4650)

Since the Blackwood editors are, without exception, the victors of these exchanges, the feared breach would seem to be Oliphant's publication of their exercises of power. While money-talk between legitimated cultural producers is clearly beyond the pale, it does not seem to be a problem in discussions of female contributors' "dealings" with the Blackwoods. Such a difference supports my first chapters' argument that in Oliphant's view woman's work is 'always already' implicated in economic production, so that the revelation of those particulars simply makes explicit the terms of her 'natural' relation to the capitalist system.

Chapter Four

Contributors of "grist to the mills of 'Maga'"

Chapters one through three have taken up issues of self-representation within the context of professional life. Although Chapter Three is devoted almost exclusively to William Blackwood, a man Oliphant never met, it is 'self-representation' in the senses that she derived her portrait of him from his own words, and his successors commissioned and approved her consequent characterisation of him as a middle-class icon of professional manhood. Because Oliphant naturalises this identity by emphasising its suggestively genetic replication in the sons, it can and does act as each editorial heir's version of himself as well. Bourdieu explains the efficacy of such a strategy:

> Whereas the holders of . . . uncertified cultural capital are always . . . required to prove themselves because they *are* only what they *do*, . . . the holders of titles of cultural nobility--like the titular members of an aristocracy, whose being, defined by their fidelity to a lineage, an estate, a race, a past, a fatherland or a tradition, is irreducible to any 'doing' . . . --only have to be what they are because all their practices derive their value from . . . being the affirmation and perpetuation of the essence by virtue of which they are performed. (23-24)

Individual differences emerge as primarily constitutional. For instance, Alexander and Robert were of less-robust health than any of the others and John was of less-vigorous a bearing than the Major. In leadership style and objectives, however, the brothers are indistinguishable from their father and each other. For this reason, I believe, none of these 'sober men of business' ever receive or require the kind of

individualising portraiture lavished on William throughout the whole of the first volume and part of the second. Feltes suggests that such a difference in representation reflects the later Victorian market's changed requirements for the publisher's name: "No longer grounded on the personality . . . it signified a corporate, capitalist identity, a 'textual' identity distinct as a commodity" (*Literary Capital* 27).

Chapter Four of the present work will examine the determining effects of the contributors' relationships with this powerful figure. Beginning with Archibald Alison (contemporarily renowned historian and legal, economic, and social analyst) and Samuel Warren (popular novelist and mediocre essayist), I will show how the value of the male identity achievable in *BM*'s service was measured according to a scale that attributed more 'weight' to the producer of cultural value than to the author whose 'light' work potentiated a predominantly economic increase. For the sake of a subsequent comparison with female contributors, then, I will consider Oliphant's evaluative representation of each of these men to reveal how Alison's widely-circulated nonfiction work enabled him to realise a highly-masculine literary identity that is imbued with a degree of (classed) cultural substance unavailable to Warren as a relatively feminised writer of popular fiction.

In turn, I will demonstrate how Warren's abundant market presence, as represented by the high sales of his serialised and compiled novels, provides a material basis for the literary value the Blackwoods' credited to his identity. It is a

source of value that is explicitly unavailable to female novelists like Mrs. Gore, whose work Oliphant says was comparably popular and whose employment with *BM* depended on a disavowal of her excessive public naming. The identity Oliphant suggests Gore was able to realise is wholly determined by the 'light' nature of her best-known genre, despite her regular contribution of nonfiction articles. Unlike Warren's nonfiction pieces, Gore's were well-received by both publisher and readers. However, Oliphant reveals that the value and scope of her work were limited by its forced fit to the feminine nature it was perceived to both express and address in the market place. I will then turn to George Eliot's stellar career as a fiction contributor to *BM*. By doing so I will be able to demonstrate how, for women, the valuing commensurability between genre and producer depended on the degree to which the (always potentially) exposed female body's threat of excess(ively sexualised) production could be seen to be contained within an acceptably domesticated and highly middle-classed domain of mediated self-expression. Though the following discussion will seem to depart from my analysis of self-representation, the final section of this chapter will show how these portrayals condition Oliphant's autobiographical emergence in *APH*.

Like Alison, Oliphant wrote much-sought-after histories (of societies and literature), but she never achieved his cultural stature. Like Warren, she wrote extremely popular novels, but never rose to his acknowledged importance with the firm. Like Gore and Eliot, she suffered the depreciation of her literature's

association with a female body in identifying proximity to the market. In Oliphant's case, however, this devaluation was not temporary as it was in Eliot's. I must add that none of these comparisons are Oliphant's express project. They are implicit in the gendered and genred conditions of value she establishes for the other authors when considered in relation to a list of her own works that she never offers. What we do see emerging explicitly in Oliphant's fragmented self-representation is the story of her arrival at professional identity. By following this story I will indicate how her structure, language, and choices of anecdotal subject enact as much as relate the alienating conditions of her identifying relations with the capitalist publishers. I will argue that by telling herself as a piecemeal tale, which deploys the ideological conventions of ideal middle-class womanhood and the literary conventions of domestic fiction, she not only avoids the threat of excessive self-fulness that degrades Gore's and Eliot's public figuration, but she also provides a 'realistic' context for the post-mythic age of the firm's history that guarantees at once its 'truth' and her own 'natural' authority as a woman to determine the shape and content of that 'truth'. But that conclusion is a long way from here. I will begin, as I have said, with Alison.

Oliphant's representations of "[t]he most important of the contributors of this [next] period" (*APH* 2: 206), Archibald Alison and Samuel Warren, underscore the firm's commitment to a market-driven system of cultural and corporate self-realisation and -evaluation. She suggests that the value of the

identity each was able to achieve was predicated upon his individualised potential for what emerges as a hierarchised commodity production in service to *BM*'s identifying project of cultural and market domination. Since Alison's relationship with the firm began long before Warren's (Oliphant says she found a reference in "The first of his letters in 1819" to a book he had borrowed years before),[1] I will discuss her management of his self-productive role in the production of the firm's status and identity first.

The self that Oliphant shows Alison realising in his professional relations with Blackwood's continues the generic product/authorial producer concomitance that she initiated with her representation of the mythic period. In Alison's case, however, it is his suggestively limitless potential for the production of a specifically-valuable intellectual commodity that informs his eventual naming and placement in her retroactive mapping of the nineteenth century's literary and cultural hierarchy.

* * *

Oliphant's first mention of Alison establishes his lineage and the class-specific nature of what amounts to an ideologically-productive family heritage: "Archibald Alison--son of the Rev. A. Alison, who was the incumbent of one of the Episcopalian churches in Edinburgh, and author of the well-known 'Essay on Taste' and other productions of the same kind--was then a young man in Edinburgh" (*APH* 2:22). At this early stage of life he was just "like so many

more" young men, ripe for professional self-realisation, but possessed no signs of distinction. Oliphant "find[s] a list of things proposed to be done which shows that he was [only] as versatile and facile in composition as the other props of the Magazine." He was just one more "advocate . . . [who] had been drawn into the circle of Blackwood as soon as he began to feel the stirrings of literary life" (2: 22). In the language of Alison's introduction, Oliphant links his reproductive readiness to a potential for indiscriminacy both in the self and the literary form he desires to express. That is, he is here simply one of the aspiring young satellites of the *BM* literary community whose class and personal attributes guarantee his fit within the elite enclosure, and even his utility to the reproduction of the group's importance, but not his individualised significance as a man of letters and culture.

Of the many things Alison proposed to write for *BM*, Oliphant's discussion focuses on a series of essays about the political and administrative history in France begun in 1830. He offered them to the Blackwoods for publication in their journal, as a reprinted letter to the editor indicates, out of

> "friendship and connections, and because the prevailing views in the work are the same as those supported in your Magazine. But my present object in sending you these papers is this. From my minute acquaintance, produced by writing this work, with the progress of the French Revolution, I think I am peculiarly qualified to write a series of Essays *comparing the first with the second Revolution*, and if agreeable to you I propose to write some such for your Magazine. The subject appears to me to be particularly at this moment of the highest importance, and I have never yet seen it fully or properly treated." (italics in original *APH* 2:22)

What Alison sells here is his capacity to produce himself simultaneously in resemblance and difference. His contributions were gladly received because "[t]he political paper had always been a great point in the Magazine, and there was nothing about which the [editors] were more anxious. [Those] done . . .by Alison . . . are characterised with enthusiasm as always satisfactory" since, like "other lawyers and men of letters, along with a steady band in Edinburgh[, he was] earnest 'on the right side'" (2: 355).[2] At least part of Alison's value is his contribution to *BM*'s typically middle-class conservatism and its avowed project of distinguishing the proprietors from both the Reform agitation of the "'lower orders'" and the "'Revolutionary ferment'" of publishers like Ballantyne, whose "'ratt[ing] like the rest," Blackwood suggests, is a craven form of market sycophancy. In contrast, he says, his journal

> "has remained staunch and true to the good old cause, and even our opponents give us credit for honesty and consistency. Our sale has in consequence been steadily increasing. Independently of the articles for the last twelve months being on the right side, they have shown more talent and power than any we have ever had. . . . The Magazine . . . will enable you to get at the truth." (2:104-05)

Within the terms of this letter, Blackwood postulates his opposition to the populist position as a guarantor of his integrity and credibility as well as a vindication of his determinate cultural power.

Alison participated in the creation of this identifying promise with his cautionary essays about France's political and social upheaval. As Dierdre David

observes about "build[ing] the foundation of culture and society," such intellectual labour was perceived as definitively masculine (15). William Blackwood obliquely notes the competitive manliness of this function in a letter to his son:

> "There is a tremendous contest all over the country, but the Tories have roused themselves. . . . 'Maga ' has fought a glorious battle and done an infinite deal of good. The articles on Reform and on the French Revolution have opened people's eyes [as Mallalieu said they should] to the danger of revolution and mob government. . . . The tables are quite turned, for nowadays we have all the wit, fun, and talent on our side of the question. They feel very sore at this, and begin to tremble at the power which they know the Tories can exercise if they chuse [sic]. . . . This cursed Reform measure, which has put a stop to everything else, has not injured 'Maga,' but rather given her a stimulus as the great organ of the Conservative party." (*APH* 2: 109)

Clearly, the editor perceives *BM*'s acquisition of ideological and cultural power as at least partly enabled by Alison's work. His labour potentiates both his own and the editor's influential identities at the moment it circulates within the periodical market with its commodification of difference and its production of the magazine as a dominant political and market "'organ.'"

From Oliphant's account, we can see that Alison's individualised significance to both *BM*'s market dominance and culture's beneficial reproduction is determined and realised by his intellectual self-expression in these articles. Oliphant also makes it clear that the "versatil[ity] and facil[ity of] composition" which formerly signified only his belonging among "the other props of the Magazine" (*APH* 2: 22) now implies a singular capacity for abundant production:

> It is extraordinary to be brought face to face with such a remarkable power of work continued over so many years, in which the workman never appears to fail or tire, but carries on his ceaseless production almost with the regularity of a machine. We have already in the earlier part of this book had to remark upon the multiplicity of his labours, but that was before he had begun those laborious works which were enough to have occupied any man's undivided attention, much less the mere leisure time of an active law official occupied sometimes in his court, as he tells us, eight or nine hours a-day. (2:06-07)

Alison's distinguishing attribute thus emerges as a particularly valuable form of emphatically embodied literary virility whose middle-class 'stirring' to industrious self-production creates both the ideal periodical factory worker and what Oliphant labels "one of the most important publications of the generation," *The History of Europe, from the Commencement to the Termination of the French Revolution* (2: 24).

This work, begun as a compilation of *BM* submissions in 1833, ultimately spanned some ten volumes, still showing "a steady sale [in 1845] . . . even though their literary qualities are not of the first order" (*APH* 2: 206). This lack, however, does not depreciate Alison's particular mode of self-expression. Oliphant even notes its necessity to the specifically nonfiction genre that constitutes Alison's personal claim to enduring cultural and personal substance:

> The picturesque style of history-writing had scarcely begun in those days. . . . [T]hough some brilliant pages had come from the pen of the Napiers, these were partially distrusted, or at least hesitated over, on account chiefly of that very brilliancy. It was the part of a writer of history to write gravely, and with a certain solemnity of rhetoric. And not only the book-buying public, whose verdict is in so many

> cases the final one, but the highest authority of the day, placed their imprimatur upon the new History. (2: 211)

Here the work is a reflection of the man and the market conditions that produced and valued it. Oliphant further suggests that this perfected fit is a commodification of distinction. The physical possession of such markers connotes classed value(s) for the producers (including the publishers), the product, and the consumer (Bourdieu 226):

> The success of the History was extraordinary. When everything else was languid, it continued to sell. "A number of people," says young John Blackwood, . . . "seem to say to themselves every two or three days, 'Come, let's have a set;'" and a set was no small matter, not lightly to be undertaken by those who had a limited purse or limited bookshelves. It became a work which no gentleman's library could do without. (*APH* 2:211)

In Oliphant's hands, Alison's posterity comes to be constituted by his potential for self-realising and -defining industry within the middle (and better) classed literary market. As we have seen from the Blackwoods' comments about the beneficial effects of this work, the author's highly and enduringly valued reproduction of society can be deployed within the cultural market to justify its own rightful centrality to that determining project.

Oliphant's depiction of Alison's self-production is almost totally without the ambitious self-fulness that we will see permeating the correspondence of Samuel Warren when he emerges in *APH* with his "startling" and "extraordinary" overnight fiction sensation, *The Diary of a Late Physician* (2: 29). Instead

Oliphant allows Alison to substantiate himself in his own words as the individualised producer and idealised product of the Blackwoods' market dominance. Importantly, this allowance also makes Oliphant appear to have received (and not to have imaginatively produced) the effects of capitalism's operations upon cultural producers. Alison writes,

> "I am much gratified by your cordial congratulations on the success of the work, which has much exceeded, at least in so short a time, my most sanguine expectations. I only regret that your excellent father did not live to see the success of an author, then unknown, whom he undertook to support in so liberal and enterprising a manner, and to whose early efforts he so powerfully contributed the invaluable benefit of his aid and encouragement. . . . [I]t affords me no small pleasure to think that the benefit may in some degree be mutual, and that if Sargeant Talfourd's [Copyright] Bill passes it may on successive editions prove the same benefit to you and your heirs as it will to me and mine." (*APH* 2: 207-08)

His self-expressed capacity for modest effacement not only confirms his middle-class nature, but also indicates the necessity in the literary market place for the author's alienating and simultaneous production of the proprietor's status and determining power over both his public expression of identity and the value it will accrue. Oliphant's emphases upon Alison's "versatil[ity] and facil[ity]" and upon his machine-like capacity for production both precede and follow this "pause to note the generous and cordial gratitude and friendship with which this most successful writer in the full tide of his triumph remembered the kind and fostering hand which had first opened to him the door of literary success" (2: 207). Her interruption implies, however, that his humble acknowledgement of his alienated

dependence comes "[b]efore . . . [his] enormous production" in ideological importance with respect to the attributes signifying the inherent merit of his classed identity. She shows how this merit is rewarded at the level of the market with enduring cultural and material benefit to the author and his family.

In the same way that the attributes of the author's distinguishing mode of production (in terms of genre and method) come to stand in for the value of the self eventually realised by Alison as nonfiction producer, Oliphant depicts Samuel Warren's identity as highly determined by his self-expression in the 'lighter' genre of fiction.

* * *

Upon his first appearance in *APH*, we discover Samuel Warren as Oliphant says "he found himself,"

> launched . . . on that flowing tide of the Magazine which led to success and public recognition. He was but A. B. to the publisher who perceived his ability at once; though indeed A. B. had in fact as much meaning in those days as the actual name of the youth whose forcible imagination had conjured up so many striking and terrible scenes. (2: 29)

Oliphant's introduction constructs Warren as a fictitiously named vessel containing only "new blood and fresh talent" which the "ever-anxious editor" is "determined to secure" as a reflection of his magazine's capacity "to command" value. Whereas Alison's distinctive value emerged slowly throughout his nonfiction self-expressions as an individualising and suggestively embodied form

of workman-like professionalism, Warren's is immediately evident in his capacity to tell stories in a new way:

> the . . . striking Sketches, some of them full of genuine terror and pity, of the 'Diary of a Late Physician' produced a startling and immediate effect. . . . These Sketches may not now have the same hold on the public, but they were very *new* at the period of their publication, and attracted a great deal of attention on account of their subjects and treatment, as well as much discussion and speculation as to their authorship and the truthfulness of their extraordinary delineations. (italics in original 2:28-29)

While Warren's "forcible imagination . . . conjured" this self-expressive distinction, seemingly out of nothing, the editor's faculty of discrimination was required to give the specifying direction and substance to the otherwise ineffective potential (2: 29). Once under the influence of *BM*'s "continued . . . command" of both the market and his self-productive labours, the unknown writer's market sign acquires the capacity to imbue him with authentic and specific "meaning[s]" of material and cultural value.

Although an early letter to Blackwood indicates Warren was actually a member of the undifferentiated category of advocate-aspirants to the literary trade, this particularly ambitious "Inner Templar of London" makes a bid for inclusion within the exclusive brotherhood after serving only six months of his apprenticeship and on the occasion of revealing his real name to the editor (*APH* 2: 30):

> "Your kind and confidential letter . . . calls for equal frankness and confidence on my part, and though perhaps it is hardly

> worth knowing, yet you may possibly feel some interest in ascertaining who the real Simon Pure is.
>
> Do you happen to recollect an English student at Edinburgh University in the session of 1827-28, who carried off several prizes [?] . . . That gentleman was one SAMUEL WARREN . . . who has had the distinguished honour of corresponding with Mr Blackwood and writing in his Magazine under . . . A. B. and "A Physician." Will that do? or will it henceforth be the case with Mr Blackwood, as it always is with the thoughtless public, that he will undervalue the contributions of one who has at length disclosed a very unimportant name? If you choose to accept my services, I willingly, by these presents, enlist myself in the corps of Sir Christopher in quality of Physician to the Regiment! My best services . . . shall always be at the command of Mr Blackwood. Though I am no novice at writing for the press, and know all the ins and outs of periodical literature, I shall always consider that my passport to literary popularity, if I should ever attain it, was obtained from Mr Blackwood. Rely upon it, your Physician will not act the part of a Renegade Subaltern, or Skipper, or Standard-bearer. I admire the principles and talent of your Magazine, . . . and am very proud to be allowed to put a little stone or two in such a glorious monument of British Literature as 'Blackwood's Magazine.' I am not one of the Press Gang, and thank God that I have no occasion to write myself into a mere *hack* for any man." (emphases in original 2: 29-30)

This letter reveals Warren's understanding that the cultural value of his academic credentials and the market value of his literary product qualify him for facilitated self-reproduction. Further, the individualised identity he claims is indistinguishable in cultural and material signification from that which he feels is inherent to his self-expressive product. Through the highly-marketable (and -valued) work by which he names himself "'the Physician to the [Blackwood] Regiment,'" he imposes his right to embody the conventionalised role of companion-hero in the firm's operative capitalist narrative of "'glorious [self-]

monument[alisation].'" In exchange for the alienation to which he implicitly submits himself, he expects an authenticating return in the form of economic and cultural substance. Though his commodified product is not about him, his self-naming makes the work interchangeable with the identity he aspires to produce through his facilitation of *BM*'s market command. In apparent acknowledgement of this market-based alignment of identity- and commodity-production, Oliphant goes on in her reflections upon the preceding letter to conflate the distinctive attributes of the author with those of his fictional wares:

> Nothing can be more characteristic of the man than this letter, with its mixture of sincerity, bombast, and self-esteem, and the artless account of the fine things which have been said about himself, which he continues through many [years of] letters to recount with great naivete to the sympathetic publisher. . . . [His work] attracted much attention, and combined caricature with sentiment, the ridiculous with the exalted, in a manner which delighted the public. (2: 31-32)

Unlike Alison's identity and value, which derived from his workmanlike reproduction of culture itself, Warren's importance (or his 'name') looks to his imaginative representation of society. The very dubiousness of his productions' "truthfulness" is, as Oliphant notes, part of their (and his) value to *BM* because they "produc[ed] the sensation [Blackwood] loved and stirr[ed] up again the endless discussions and public criticism which he was well aware were of so much importance to a periodical publication" (2: 28). However, she goes on to depict Warren's conjured literary substance (brought from nothing real) as possessing

just as unreliable a reality as the product itself:

> the fount of his inspiration , such as it was, ran quickly dry. After the . . . 1832 [novel], which had caught the attention of the multitude in a remarkable degree, . . . it is not till 1839 . . . that we find him carrying on with much *eclat* and great delight to himself his . . . 'Ten Thousand a-Year,' which indeed seems to have fully justified his own estimate of its merits by the eager reception accorded to it. (2:216-17)

Inspiration resonates against the stable production of middle-classed literary identity in much the same way 'brilliance' did in Alison's generic self-production. Here, however, the market's perception of the product's high literary merit is as necessary and integral to its own (and its producer's) accumulation of material and cultural value as it is to the production of the periodical's economic and literary status: "Ten Thousand a-Year' . . . achiev[ed] extraordinary success. The Trade took it by hundreds, and it was read and commented on everywhere, reviewed not always favourably (but that was immaterial, save for the author's feelings" (2: 279).

Oliphant also suggests, when she discusses Warren's sale of less-valuable fiction to another periodical, that the attribution of merit becomes inherent to the literary self thus produced. The 'name' comes to be as much a commodity as (and possibly of greater market value than) the literary product itself:

> A slight discussion occurred about the publication in a London magazine of a story called the 'Waggoner,' which Blackwood . . . had rejected. Warren had a perfect right to dispose of this as he pleased; but he surrounded it with a web of precautions, exacting a promise that his name should not even be disclosed to the publisher.

> . . . This promise was broken, however, and . . . the author of the 'Passages' was thus made to appear in a rival publication as if he had abandoned or been abandoned by his literary godfather and friend. His . . . despair and rage [towards those "who had put him in so false a position"] receive a comic touch when he notes that for the communication (the same people having offered him any price for a signed contribution) he received only the ignoble sum of seven and a half guineas! (*APH* 2: 40)

'Name' emerges here as the joint property of the writer whose substantiated value it denotes and the publisher whose command of the market it at once guarantees and requires (for substantiation). The language of this passage construes the literary and cultural domain as a very patriarchally organised market place whose secure command by the head of a publishing House generates the determined identity of the potentially abandoned (disinherited) first son. That previously indeterminate vessel of potential depends upon the public acknowledgement of the father for a market fulfilment of each's identificatory promise and value.

Whereas Alison's success, in Oliphant's telling, is an inevitable (which is to say 'naturalised') effect of his physical capacity to reproduce an alienated middle-class self with and for culture by means of his professional (nonfiction) submissions to the Blackwoods' determining power, she refers to Warren's eminence as "more like the extraordinary and factitious successes we see nowadays . . . [He] promised for a time to rival Dickens in the approbation of that strange public whose vagaries are not to be accounted for, and whose tastes so many writers study in vain" (*APH* 2: 216). It is the imposition on the pair of one

of the "most fundamental oppositions ion the structure [of the system of conditions] (high/low, rich/poor etc.)" and, as Bourdieu says it will, "tend[s] to establish [the] fundamental structuring principles of practices and the perception of [the value of] practices" (172). Warren's continuous and childlike self-aggrandisement implies his fearful comprehension of what Oliphant suggests in this citation is an aura of illegitimacy attaching to his fictional expression of himself as the 'star-child' of the Blackwoods' literary paternity.

With the "fount of . . .inspiration" that floated him to literary substance proving highly unreliable (*APH* 2: 216-17), Warren turns to writing nonfiction as a legitimating source of self-identification. He offers his services, however, by "attempt[ing] to put on the robes of Christopher [North]" or, in other words, by merely emulating rather than 'really' being an integral member of the elite brotherhood: "Warren, like others, after his buoyant elation and sense of importance, had to lower his pretensions . . . [I]t would not seem that he was ever successful in his cultivation of general literary subjects" (2: 38). He only possesses "pretensions" to what he acknowledges is a superior "'*caste*'" of writers (emphasis in original 2: 38) and not the (nonfiction) capacity to legitimate his belonging within a group whose authority is far loftier than Warren's 'natural' affinity for the tastes of "that strange public" (2: 216). Although Bourdieu is speaking of cultural objects when he says that their "very meaning and value . . . varies according to the [cultural] system . . . in which [they are] placed" (88) his

point applies particularly well to Warren's name as a cultural token. Beyond the fiction "system" of production, his name possesses no promise of quality or authenticity of self-expression. The inferior value of his specific niche is tacit in his "recogni[tion of his] exclusion" (Bourdieu 84). Much later Oliphant adds that "after the conclusion of [his] great work[s] . . . his connection with the Magazine continued, in the way of occasional articles, for years. If not quite so versatile as the other writers who turned their hands to anything, he was always quite willing to undertake anything that fell at all in his way" (*APH* 2: 230). Ultimately lacking even the versatility necessary for inclusion in the important group of 'props', Oliphant specifies Warren's willing submission to the self-expressive determinations of his editorial superiors as the attribute signifying his value and identity: "the real man in him was more ready to yield ["what was dear to his heart" in his writing] than to take up arms against his friend" (*APH* 2: 228-29). Authenticating affiliation depends on his generic self-expression of an identity that the paternalistic editors determine is of greater market than cultural value to their production of themselves. As we will see emerging in Oliphant's representation of the women contributors of fiction, beginning with Mrs. Gore, such a close association of the self-expressive product with the market precludes the author's acquisition of cultural weight (Ferris 43) In Bourdieu's terms, Warren is assigned a "rank and specific power" within the field of production according to the "specific[ally economic] capital [he] can mobilize . . . though [it] also . . . exert[s]

an effect of contamination" (113). However, where her account of Warren never even alludes to his physical person, her discussions of the women repeatedly indicates their bodies' implication in the determination of their valued identity.

* * *

The first mention of Mrs. Gore occurs during Oliphant's narration of Warren's relations with *BM* and in the context of his demonstrable dedication to the firm's interests:

> Warren, like most of the other contributors to 'Maga,' did his best at all times to bring new recruits to the standard. . . . He . . . brought Mrs Gore, the fashionable novelist of the day *par excellence*, who contributed several light articles, one of which Warren characterises as 'delicious,' and whose straightforward desire to know at once the rate of pay accorded to 'known authors,' on the principle that 'a sparrow in the hand is better than a pheasant in the bush,' is very natural and likely. (*APH* 2: 235-36)

This passage marks the emergence of women into an important market niche as the moment when a "natural and likely . . . desire" to secure the best possible conditions for literary self-production began to take its realistic place beside the culturally-valued pretense of "persons of genius who presumably were so much superior to any such inducement" as self-interest (2: 236). I would argue that this establishment of Oliphant's narrative as one of professional realism is a necessity of her portrayal of Gore's developing relationship to *BM*.

Without such a generic transition, Gore's value to the firm as a "fashionable novelist . . . *par excellence*" would preclude her implicit utility to Oliphant as a

respectable female precursor of her own prolific production of popular fiction and 'light' nonfiction. In addition, the magazine's regular resource of goods bearing the stigma of market appeal would make the Blackwoods seem to be mere panderers to the public taste for literary pleasuring (Ferris 40). With the transition, the firm's inclusion of such feminised commodities becomes the necessary economic underpinning for its continued capacity to circulate apparently disinterested (which is also to imply less-profitable) literature. Implicitly, then, Oliphant begins in Gore's representation to show how the commodification of women's 'natural' literary mode of self-expression forms the material basis of culture's reproduction. Though an important role, it is not without devaluing implications for the women who took it up. According to the seemingly market-blind terms by which 'value' has been ascribed to authors and their productions up to this point in *APH*'s version of literary history, Gore's identifying and successful production of a definitively commodifiable literature simultaneously produces her as a knowing effect of and an effective participant in the operations of the literary market. The result is her cultural devaluation as a literary figure of purely economic substance. This section will argue that Oliphant not only represents this devaluation in the language of necessary displacement and subordination with which she describes Gore's literary career, but also structurally enacts it by making her discussions of Gore's role in literary history serve a subordinately revelatory function with respect to the more (culturally and narratively) central

male identities negotiable in *BM*'s service.

In that first passage of the few that refer to Gore and her work for *BM*,[3] Oliphant juxtaposes Gore's "natural and likely" economic opportunism against the tacitly "[un]natural and [un]likely . . . presum[ption]" of economic disinterest that identified the past's "persons of genius" (*APH* 2: 236). However realistic this opposition makes Gore seem, it also precludes her accreditation with cultural value. In Oliphant's recollection of an evaluative about-face executed against the initial acclaim for one of Gore's novels, she reveals the contribution of the novelist's abundant market presence and her identification with the 'light' nature of her literary self-production to her exclusion from this category of cultural substance:

> The name of Mrs Gore is . . . almost forgotten now. She was a very popular fashionable novelist in those days, turning out one piece of fiction after another as fast as pen and hand could go. I can remember the discussion which arose, and excited and puzzled the newspapers as well as perhaps a portion of the literary classes, when there appeared anonymously a novel called 'Cecil,' which was still more fashionable and more popular than Mrs Gore, as if a new star of magnitude had risen upon the world, until it was discovered that the new planet was but the old one in a new development, and the author of 'Cecil' Mrs Gore herself. (2: 364-65)

Unlike Warren, whose novel(ty) stimulated the market and indicated his desirable distinction, Gore experiences the imposter's rejection. Her supposed singularity is revealed to be mere mass appeal. As a consequence she assumes the burden of that attribute's material nature.

Ironically, the name which denoted this devalued feminine self-production within the market place was first circulated by Gore's husband, who was a widely-read translator. A letter from Gore to Warren suggests the discrepancy between the value of public naming for women and men. She says, "'my name (having been appended to numerous translations of my husband's) is more hackneyed than my pen. The only three successful novels I have produced--'Mothers and Daughters,' 'The Peeress,' and 'Cecil'--appeared anonymously'" (*APH* 2: 349). The 'hackneyed' nature of the name here attaches only to Gore's association with it and not to her husband's. His abundant naming presumably provided him with a vehicle to public authority as a frequently-published translator. In contrast, her mere association with the much-marketed name, despite her attempted anonymity, "[r]elegate[s]" the female identity it had suddenly and cumulatively come to specify "to the servile sphere of trade and commerce, . . . mark[ing] a . . . promiscuity . . . that threatened . . . the literary sphere" (Ferris 43). As Oliphant's comments of the last paragraph have revealed, the refusal of literary weight for her successful fiction (her 'light' work *Cecil*) is entirely determined by this perception of female literary entrepreneurialism as transgressive and excessive feminine self-production in the market place.

Such a cultural depreciation of the 'known' woman's literary labours also makes her vulnerable to economic exploitation, as the previously cited of Gore's letters to Warren goes on to indicate:

> "[Cecil] was not successful, if I am to believe Mr Bentley, who made me refund L60 of the L300 he gave me for it, on pretense that it was unsaleable. At this moment he is demurring about paying a portion of L95 (!) which he agreed to give for a three-volume novel of mine called the 'Money-Lender,' that has had great success in a periodical. Colburn and Bentley are, in fact, the Scylla and Charybdis of the novel craft; and the latter, knowing that a deadly feud rageth between me and his opponent, swallows me in his whirlpool, which I should bear better were not others dependent on my extrication.
>
> I have now by me the best novel I have written . . . which I shall have to give away to Bentley unless Blackwood should think it worthy of his Magazine and a reprint. If you thought any good would arise from it, I would send over a volume for his inspection. But if not, as much delay would be fatal at this book-bargaining session, I had better perhaps dispose of it to my Shylock."
>
> (*APH* 2: 349)

Oliphant's earlier reference to this letter cites Gore's "natural and likely" preference for *BM*'s immediate financial "sparrow" over the larger economic potential suggested by an as-yet-undetermined "pheasant in the bush" (2: 235). I assume from this hint that the rate of pay to be expected from the Blackwoods was even-handedly modest.

Five days after Gore wrote this letter, Warren responded with reassurances of the effect she could anticipate from his "'delighted . . . introduc[tion] to the Blackwoods, whom [she] will find gentlemen in every sense of the world, more particularly in money matters:'"

> "I have spoken to [John] Blackwood . . . and he begs you will, if possible, send all three volumes. They will immediately read them, and let you know their opinion. It will (if suitable) appear first in the Magazine, and then be published separately, on terms which you must agree upon. By the way, remember the Tory character of

> Blackwood, and do not give your Whig friends too many flattering representations in your characters." (*APH* 2: 349-50)

Warren's promises conflate the editors' identifying social practice with those of their capitalist enterprise in such a way that their determination of her work's economic value appears to be a simultaneous endorsement of her social (but not necessarily cultural) standing. That is, because the Blackwoods are known to be "'gentlemen in every sense of the word,'" their discriminating accreditation of Gore in the literary market is also the material restoration to her of her true social identity. Here, however, that truth of classed self is accessible only by its reconstitution as "'money matter'" over which the firm holds a "'more particularly'" gentlemanly power of discrimination and distribution. Gore's resigned understanding, to the effect that she will be assured of at least a "'sparrow['s]'" measure of her identity's material basis from her association with *BM*, suggests her willing submission to the editors' limits upon the scope and value of her contributed self-expressions. John Blackwood's subsequent letter to his co-editor brother reveals these limits as reflections of a profoundly gendered intersection of cultural, social, and market considerations taking place across the commodified product of identifying literary labour. He writes,

> "I enclose a letter from Mrs Gore. I am very much struck with it. . . . What pleases me most is the circumstance of her not being the writer of all the things that have passed under her name. I have little doubt it will be a tale well worth publishing. It is just the sort of thing *women* want in 'Maga,' and indeed 'Mothers and Daughters' is reckoned a sort of classic novel in that style . . . I hope what she

> seems to have sent you may prove good." (emphasis in original *APH* 2: 350)

John Blackwood's decision to accept Gore's work is based on values that specify at once his own relation to the (identificatory and evaluative) intersection of culture, society, and the market place. His first consideration is his own class-based response to the tale of feminine exploitation in her professional self-revelation to Warren. The second, the reality of her market absence (which is to say, the Blackwood-Gore is not the named token of over-commodification circulating with such devaluing excess in the public mind). The third, the fit between the 'modest' female identity Gore's public absence enables and the requirements of the gendered market niche she will be paid to fulfill. The fourth, the speculation that her execution of her 'fit' work will "'prove good,'" ostensibly in the sense of a highly gendered measure of literary merit. From the preceding conditions of Blackwood's decision, however, it is also apparent that her modestly paid labour will "'prove [the] good'" inhering to her professionalised womanhood, a measure chartable in economic increments. Further, that good womanhood will now be authenticated by the Blackwoods' benevolent capitalist alienation of Gore from her direct conversion of her self-expression to material identity within the market.

For John Blackwood, the proof of the 'good' for the "popular fashionable novelist" (*APH* 2: 364-65) rests on her works' manifestation of particularly

gendered standards of cultural and market merit. On the one hand, the story must be, in the editor's words, "'well worth publishing'" so that it does not discredit the magazine's standing as a purveyor of quality goods. For the assurance of this high quality Blackwood refers only to the critical record of valued production attaching to the author's name. She is a proven producer of what "'is reckoned a sort of classic novel in that style'" (2: 350). On the other hand, he links the "'sort of classic'" he hopes for to its potential to capture and dominate a specifically-feminine segment of the periodical market. In Bourdieu's work, this placement within a specific system of (de)valuation "betrays [the genre's] relation to culture and cultural authorit[y]" (84). From the editor's conditional language we can see that, set against a category of apparently absolute 'classicity,' the value of Gore's work lies in its capacity to resemble an elite literature without producing any of the reader-exclusivity by which its cultural value would be authenticated if it were to be valued as a 'genuinely' classic novel. A woman's "'sort of classic'" writing, then, is attributed value according to the degree of accessibility it manifests. That attribute, in turn, can be measured by the number of people who will pay to take advantage of it; or, in other words, by its popularity.

Such a construction of the truly valuable in women's 'fit' literary work marks it out as particularly suited to the requirements of the periodical industry's subscription-generated capital base. In the letters about Gore that Oliphant chooses for *APH*--I will return shortly to the implications of the fact that she

chooses none included between the editors and Gore--this market-oriented suitability is also perceived to inhere to women's nonfiction submissions. When John Blackwood writes to his brother about having granted Gore the opportunity to submit "'a humorous notice of the books addressed to ladies'" (*APH* 2: 364), he obliquely takes note of both the consumer power represented by a specifically-classed and gendered segment of the market and puts the author's capacity to command that power in its cultural place: "'I fear that telling Mrs Gore we liked short lively papers has opened a sluice over our heads: two came over yesterday; the one I read is light and amusing, but she might have made much more of it'" (2: 364). The opportunity doubly relegates her work to the margin: it is the light treatment of a literature already defined by 'lightness.' Her "'notice'" thus becomes an emphatically market-driven and -driving literary practise whose cultural weight is denied on the basis of its determinately feminine mode of expression, its specified market destiny (which Dale Kramer intimates ["Reviews" 98] is betrayed by Blackwood's order to Gore for "'short lively papers'"), and its marginalised target readership.

Oliphant represents this highly-determined circumscription of female self-expression as an amelioration of Gore's vulnerability both to exploitation and to perceptions of excessive self-production in her previous capacity as a *femme sole* of the market place. *BM*'s offer of employment will clearly instrumentalise her production of her own literary life to serve its own market interests in precisely the

same way that Colburn and Bentley have been reported to do. However, her known alienation in the Blackwoods' periodical service acts as a type of professional coverture. The advantages of such a regulating mediation of Gore-as-public-woman are of a cultural and social nature: she is respectably distanced from the market place by the protective representation of a powerful member of the literary centre who exercises a determining circumscription over the amount and mode of the self she will express from the margins. The disadvantages appear to be of the economic and literary variety: she is to receive a "'sparrow['s'" portion (however regularly) for work that is now limited to the category of "'capital light weight for the Magazine'" (*APH* 2: 366). Under the sheltering wing of contributorship, woman's literary potential is as 'middled' as her redemptively-constructed class of public womanhood. Both determinations seem to be, in Blackwood's evaluative terms, poised against an implicit aristocracy of potential and heavy-weight capital that are located in an unspecified literary elsewhere, but which are determinately preclusive to legitimate female occupation(s).

As with Alison and Warren, then, Oliphant depicts Gore's self-realisation in *BM*'s service as indistinguishable from the genres in which she publicly expressed that identity in terms of individualising attributes and cultural value. There are, however, at least three important differences. First, she reprints no direct correspondence between Gore and the editors. Second, she affords Gore much less space in the historical record than that apportioned to the men. Third,

the space that is allotted to Gore is fragmented by its appendant relation to narrative revelations of male identity. These differences, I would argue, are as much the necessary effect of the gendered limits of professional representation--according to which Oliphant reproduces literary history and, indeed, according to which she will eventually represent herself within that history--as they are of Gore's apparently transient eminence.

To respond to these differences I must return to the association of Gore's direct entrepreneurial negotiation of the literary market with an excess of female self-fulness. This premise for the representation of Gore as a (de)valued member of the larger literary community and of *BM*'s staff prescribes mediation (or strategic indirectness) as the condition under which the female literary professional may be seen to produce a socially acceptable and economically viable identity. I believe that it is in keeping with the requirements of this condition that Oliphant subjects Gore's "natural and likely" expressions of material self-interest to the discretion of Warren's and her own reportage. Even further, I suggest that the minor space and appendant status accorded to Gore-as-professional-female-subject--despite her known prominence as a highly popular novelist--is Oliphant's structural enactment of the identifying marginalisation that at once permitted the literary woman-of-all-work's authenticating claims to respectability and precluded any cultural substantiation of her as a producer of literary value. Oliphant's closing commentary about the novelist's career constructs the inevitable end of

this socially-resonant process of evaluative classification as the retroactive erasure of her productivity's value to the material interests she serves and of her importance as a cultural reproducer:

> What an extraordinary change of sentiment has come over the world since [Mrs Gore's popularity]! . . . [L]ike so many others, [she] is clean forgotten and out of mind, as if she had never framed a plot or illustrated any of the dilemmas of fashionable life. . . . [or contributed] 'those little sort of sketches' [that John Blackwood said] made 'capital light weight for the Magazine, and [were] much liked':--The following introduces . . . a more attractive figure.
> (*APH* 2: 365-66)

Unlike Oliphant's striking of Maginn from the Blackwood's book of cultural life, her relegation of Gore to canonical oblivion is not justified by a professionally-revealed truth of (classed) fitness for production. Instead Oliphant represents Gore as having achieved a significant cultural authority as a popular resource with respect to "the dilemmas of . . . life" on her own periodically-expressed merits (*APH* 2: 365). It is only when Gore's maternal priorities (her capacity for sexual reproduction) motivate her "natural and likely" self-service that her market-responsive displacement seems to deploy itself. In Oliphant's version of the pivotal determination of value perceived to describe Gore's career, the novelist is precluded from the stellar potential suggested in the phrase "as if a star of magnitude had risen" by the market-revealed truth of her identity as "only the old planet in a new development" (2: 365). The named abundance of her public presence erases her product's previously attributed cultural and literary value by

exposing her productivity's material foundation. Paternalistic capitalists of the Blackwoods' respectable stripe emerge as viable, if necessarily subordinating, protectors of such culturally exposed/exposing women. The editors themselves become her primary market and they determine, according to the tenets of their identifying system of ideological and literary values, whether or not the larger market will even get to cast an economic ballot on the merit of their determined representative. The cultural identity served with this process is necessarily first and foremost that of 'the sober men of business' under whose paying and displacing gaze the literary labourer produces her commodities and her own material, literary, and social life.

Thus Oliphant recreates Gore's disappearance from the cultural firmament into the always economically-implicated orbital service of the dependant and alienated woman to the identifying public interests of men. There were few exceptions to this determining subordination. Certainly Oliphant's portrayal of herself in *APH* suggests that she was not one. Before considering her identifying resource to the respectable subjection she demonstrates here as having been modelled for her by Gore, however, I will examine briefly the narrative marks of difference describing and justifying the stellar trajectory of George Eliot.

* * *

Oliphant prefaces the first prolonged discussion of George Eliot with a

description of her male partner's participation in *BM*'s production. Lewes is, she says, "one of those men of letters whose reputation is greater than their works, and to a great extent independent of them" (*APH* 2: 433). She then goes on to suggest that a large part of his status was derived from his literary sponsorship of and subsequent association with a far more important "new candidate for reputation." His first task as sponsor is overcoming the "almost impossible" obstacle of the "fictitious[ly]" male author's doubt "that his production was of any value or importance." These two terms are here distinct and suggestively alternate categories of literary determination and Eliot's anonymous work must prove its qualification for the second by fulfilling John Blackwood's expectations of the author's "'worth[iness] of the honours of print and pay'" (2: 435). For this supposedly male unknown, those honours unproblematically result in his subsequent accreditation--first, by Blackwood in his determining capacity as gatekeeper/reader and, second, by the public--as a man of "'first-rate'" literary substance (2: 436).

Eliot's market and literary value are established simultaneously with her first production: "without knowing, [she] had stumbled unawares one day into that enchanted land of genius to whose gates there is no key, and into which only those can enter who are to that manner born" (*APH* 2: 436). This observation makes Eliot's achievement of both kinds of value a mark of her inherent literary aristocracy. The work in question is *Scenes of a Clerical Life*. It bore "all the

signs of a great success" (2: 439) to Blackwood: "'The public is a very curious animal, and those who are most accustomed to feel its pulse know best how difficult it is to tell what will hit the bull's-eye; but I shall be much astonished if [the work] does not go to the hearts of all readers. . . . Critics are a good deal divided . . . but they generally are about anything of real merit'" (2: 438). Whereas this combination of popular appeal and critical controversy foreshadowed Gore's marginalisation, it enables Eliot's 'star' identification. Blackwood, however, claims this acquisition of identity as being dependent on his "'light[ing] upon a new author who is uncommonly like a first-class passenger'" (2: 438). His comprehension of the inherent reciprocity of his capitalist relations with Eliot construes it as the symbiotic production of identificatory value.

Though Eliot is feminised by the editor's construction of her as a relatively passive professional dependent (he suggests himself only as having "'lighted'" upon her, while she is positively named as his "'passenger'"), her literary production is not associated with any of the devaluing attributes of women's work that were attributed to Gore's earlier and highly popular novels of fashion. At least part of the reason was probably the carefully preserved male identity that Oliphant says "still veiled" the successful woman behind the revealed pseudonym (*APH* 2: 439). Eliot had already achieved market and cultural dominance long before this eventuality. As a male 'star', she possesses the market-based power to reject her determined passenger status to take to herself the clearly self-interested

reins of her career. She says,

> 'I have now so large and eager a public, that if we were to publish the work without a preliminary appearance in the Magazine the first sale would infallibly be larger, and a considerable profit be gained, even though the work might not impress the public so strongly as 'Adam' has done. . . . The large circulation of 'Adam' renders the continual advertisement afford by publication in a first-rate periodical--an advertisement otherwise so valuable--comparatively unimportant.' (2: 442)

It seems clear that what Oliphant calls Eliot's "keen professionalism" is this "strong . . . defense of her rights" to relatively unalienated literary self-production (*APH* 2: 447). As Feltes points out, and Oliphant suggests, this conflict is as much over "the relations of production . . . which would acknowledge [Eliot's] professional status" as it is over "the ownership of profits" (*Modes* 49). Whatever the issue, however, Eliot's direct determination of herself becomes very difficult to protect when a provincial cleric, Joseph Liggins, is named the author of *Adam Bede*. Defending her professionally accredited singularity is, ultimately, the "business [that] made inevitable the disclosure of her . . . carefully preserved secret [of womanhood], and thus betrayed her peculiar position to the world" (*APH* 2: 444). As soon as she is 'unveiled' as a sexually transgressive woman, her current work becomes immediately suspect as the commodification of the "betrayed" sexual relations (*APH* 2: 444). Though Oliphant is otherwise fairly reserved in her treatment of Eliot as a woman of genius,[4] she is sympathetic in her discussion of the public's unjust resignification of the work's "admirable

qualities"as a damning materialisation of the (potentially pro)creative female body in the market process of self-production:

> It is curious now, however, to know that the book which was on the eve of publication . . . when her real personality was thus revealed, was injured by the disclosure, and that the foolish part of the public read an equivocal meaning into various portions of a book so spotless, and inspired with a spirit so noble and pure . . . 'The Mill on the Floss' . . . has become the one of her books most closely associated with George Eliot, and the one in which her special devotees delight to find something of a reflection of herself . . . far as the circumstances are from any resemblance to those of the author. (*APH* 2: 445-46)

Oliphant's reattribution of artistic nobility and purity to Eliot seems a progressive gesture. However, Bourdieu points out that such a reduction to purely aesthetic intent "implies [Eliot's] break with the ordinary attitudes towards the world which . . . is a social break" (31). In this light, Oliphant's generosity tacitly bars Eliot from authenticating identification with middle-class womanhood.

The revelation of sexualised identity results in Eliot's sudden specification as a woman by the Blackwoods, whose previous correspondence had been "kept up. . . under [the] fictitious character" of a male author "for some three years" after she had become known to them (*APH* 2: 439). For the first time they refer to Eliot as "'her.'" The context of its occurrence is her advised withdrawal from the masculine ground of professional self-assertion and market participation, or, in Feltes' words her "social[ly] coerc[ed] feminine subordination on the level of production" (*Modes* 40). John Blackwood wrote to her, "'As to the effect of the

spread of the secret upon the new book, there must be different opinions . . . M[ine] is that George Eliot has only to write her books quietly without disturbing herself with what other people are imagining, and she can command success'" (*APH* 2: 445). Oliphant says it was "a prophecy . . . fulfilled to the letter, and indeed beyond it, since George Eliot, at and after the zenith of her fame, commanded not only success, but a sort of adoring acceptance in every respect" (*APH* 2: 445). She goes on to indicate that at least part of the reason Eliot was able to overcome the exposure of her sexually active female body was Lewes's cherishing and emphatic feminisation of the threatening market figure of excess:

> In the earlier correspondence . . . there are few traces of the almost extravagantly watchful and constant care with which [Lewes] seemed in later days to surround the great novelist. Then she does her business herself, with the clear head and strong intelligence which might be divined from her work, but on her possession of which all later reports tended to cast doubts. (*APH* 2: 448).

Lewes's placement of Eliot on the recuperatively respectable pedestal of helpless femininity marks her arrival at enduring literary eminence. That is, the man of letters' interventionary disavowal of her agency, singularity, and professional self-sufficiency produces an acceptably circumscribed and mediated womanhood. It does so by swaddling the productive female body within the exaggerated domestic cover(ture) Oliphant says was implicit in his public representation of her interests. It also, and at precisely the same time, authenticates her perceived literary substance by erasing the direct market

presence preclusive to the possession of 'true genius'. According to Oliphant, then, the high cultural value attributed to Eliot's work entirely overwrites the marketable attributes of womanhood which at first devalued the literary self-expression of her body at its associatively reproductive labours. To some extent this subsumation of personal characteristics by the cultural character of produced literature is initiated by the Blackwoods' unflagging support and alliance during the crisis of sexual disclosure. On the one hand, such editorial loyalty suggests *BM*'s stake in standing behind the determinations of value implicitly undertaken by its gatekeeper. On the other hand, the very possibility of such solidarity suggests the imperviousness of *BM*'s market-substantiated editorial determinations to effective contradiction.

Ultimately, then, John Blackwood's prophecy about Eliot's continued command of market and cultural value under the highly-feminised conditions of classed domestic production proves as good as the one he made about Gore based on the 'light' nature of her identifying literary labours. As we will see in Oliphant's representation of her own career, she also experienced these 'self-fulfilling' prophecies as determinations of alienated (cultural-)value production.

Notes

1. It is noteworthy that Alison, who was clearly employed by *BM* during the 'golden age of its history,' is not included in the mythic group. This exclusion points to the determined (rather than determining) nature of the identity available to authors whose literary productions were knowingly and expressly circulated as cultural commodities, rather than as culture itself as were Wilson's and Lockhart's work.

2. Oliphant includes an 1835 letter from Alfred Mallalieu, who was "[a fellow-]editor, or at least principal contributor, of various London papers . . . and apparently also engaged in official work of some description in connection with the Foreign Office. His special department was politics and political economy, and his pretensions to superior knowledge were very high" (2: 200). This letter points to the editors' direct and correct association of strategic self-expression (which is to say strategically-classed distinction) with social and cultural power:

> 'curious and original facts[, opinions, and ideas] will tell among practical people, the trading interests, and the middle classes, with whom now more than ever. . . it [is] a point to stand well. The old party-ground is slipping fast from under us, and it is necessary to accommodate ourselves partially to new tastes, circumstances, and classes . . . without, however, losing sight of old friends and principles, which for many years to come must always be our mainstay. Still we must be blind, indeed, not to see that power has changed hands, and surely we of the Conservative middle classes are fully as well able and well entitled to wield it as our fellows of the Whig Radical stamp. The worst is the aristocracy . . . [who] will not open their eyes, but persist to believe that we labour for them alone, when in fact and with cause we are preparing hereafter to take part in the Government with them.' (2: 203)

3. This is a strange dearth in view of Oliphant's later admission that "There is a good deal about her in these letters" (2: 365). Research into this omitted correspondence would provide, in all probability, a fruitful comparison of the two women's positions with the firm and with the public.

4. For instance, when Eliot makes her bid for market independence, she does not construct it, as she did for Gore, as understandable self-interest. Instead she speaks of the "temporary *refroidissement* between writer and publisher, which," she says, "I confess for my own part, makes rather an interesting break in the applause on one side and acceptance of it on the other, which, however heartily we may join in the applause, makes us after a while desire the interposition of some other human sentiment to vary the prevailing note".

Chapter Five

"General utility woman"

Oliphant's ubiquitous presence in *APH* is most often detectable in her capacity as the narrator/compiler of the firm's history. Her first named mention is in volume one's Prefatory note where her credentials and her death are indicated.[1] The last mention is her own recollection of the Major at the end of volume two where she names just one of her many literary accomplishments, *The Chronicles of Carlingford*. While the document she authors begins and ends with her, it is also interspersed with such self-references as the 'events' of *Katie Stewart* and *Margaret Maitland*. These public milestones, however, are always offered within the context of personal anecdotes without such publishing details as are present for Eliot. The personal, rather than the literary emphasis in the considerable narrative space Oliphant allots for herself[2] suggests a desire to efface the market aspect of the identity she cannot help but develop for herself in *APH*. Elisabeth Jay observes that such a "personal view [from] a 'woman of letters'" also indicates her "confiden[ce in] her right to assess her peers" (256). I will return to the means and further implications of this desire later. For now I want to look at the self she does willingly express within the firm's history.

Oliphant emerges in direct self-representation in a reminiscence of her first meeting with John Wilson, then "near the end of his life" (*APH* 1: 315). She describes herself as "a young writer, much abashed with so novel a character,"

who receives directly and "reverentially [from] that majestic old figure, as [from] one of the forefathers, judges, and lawgivers among men," a conditional dispensation from the limits of self-exertion traditionally imposed upon the ideological figure, if not the actual practice, of the middle-class Victorian woman: "My friend [Dr. Moir, known as the poet 'Delta' to *BM*'s readers] said something, perhaps a little conventionally, about my modest achievement in literature, and that I must be warned against overwork. 'No need of that,' said Christopher [Wilson's pseudonym]; 'so long as she is young and happy work will do her no harm'" (1: 316). This paraphrase of Moir's words, invokes the ideas of "modest[y]" and "overwork," the keystones upon which we have seen her construct her undervalued literary identity throughout her *A&L*--the identity which, she suggests in her essays about 'the woman question,' is the inevitable share of respectable and exploitable womanhood. Here, however, she makes the exchange between "the keen . . . professional man" and the fading "Norse demigod" of literature, an exchange with respect to which she is the "patron[ised]" subject and witness, the male-negotiated determination of her means and mode of literary self-realisation. That is to say, when Moir identifies her as being of "modest achievement" and counsels her to a commensurate degree of exertion, Wilson contradicts only the advice, saying nothing about her destined level of attainment. She remains silent during this exchange, without any specified physical presence except eyes.,

Within the terms of *APH*'s identifying operations, however, these are very powerful eyes, as Oliphant herself obliquely notes when she recalls how "the two men [were] transfigured" by her narrativising gaze. Wilson, "the large old poet," becomes "in [this] pair of young eyes, . . . like a [literary] tower and opposite to him[,] . . . with the glimmer of gentle poetry," Moir's "talent was but a modest taper" (1: 316). Of the two men, Oliphant credits Wilson with a greater authority to name and condition her professional potential. She turns Moir's paraphrased term back on him so that he, and not she, "modest[ly] taper[s]" into nonpresence within her hierarchisation of the men's talent and importance. She attributes Wilson's superior authority to his public identity--Christopher North--whose still-great cultural stature and by-then-fading public presence she "reverentially" represents as a body that is still capable of standing in for the mythic and "novel . . . character" himself: "Professor Wilson came to us, large, and loosely clad, with noiseless large footsteps . . . [H]is hair thin, which had been so abundant, and dimmed out of its fine colour, but still picturesquely falling about his ears, making a background for his still ruddy countenance. . . . [He] had by that time almost ceased to work, . . . the world had outgrown him" (1: 316). As this literary edifice of the vanishing past bestows his blessing upon her as the next generation of writer, she receives authority only for her self-production as a literary labourer. Her anecdotal obedience to this command implicitly represents her as the determining link between the passing age of mythic embodiment and the

disembodied but productive moment of transition into the periodical industry's future.

Oliphant's next personal anecdote is a recollection of a visit from R. D. Blackmore, "the author of some of the most delightful and racy novels of the period" (*APH* 2: 21). Instead of the "talk . . . of books" that might have been expected "when two writers of fiction got together," however, Oliphant reports that they spoke only of gardening (2: 21). In her memory, "the little desert of the drawing-room began . . . to flourish and grow sweet" in a way that it would clearly not have if literary instead of horticultural production had been the subject of their visit. The intellectual exchange of a 'salon' occasion gives way to the mundane priority of domestic cultivation. Despite Blackmore's celebrity, then, contact with Oliphant spontaneously reveals his quotidian ordinariness.[3] The site from which her professional reproduction of him originates is one in which she has an invisible and passively receptive presence that silently transforms the experience into the literary practice of imaginative recreation. Within this reproductive moment, the sterile drawing-room becomes the fertile ground of domesticated nature and Blackmore's 'reality' is revealed, seemingly spontaneously, in an 'insider' illumination of the visiting novelist's life and identity. Oliphant knows from her experience with her 'Old Saloon' series for *BM* that such gossipy tidbits are things "for which people . . . look" in overviews of the literary industry (*A&L* 338). For this reason, her inclusion of these personally informed anecdotes may be

understood as a deliberated market practice from which she erases herself and her agency to leave only their domesticated traces within her literary reproduction of professional figures (including her own).

Such a domestication of her professional labour is evident in each overt self-representation throughout *APH*. In chapter twenty-three of volume two, entitled 'The New Blackwood Band,' she introduces what is listed in the chapter's subtitles as "Mrs Oliphant's first contribution to 'Maga.'" As in her story about Blackmore, she is not the subject of the segment in which she appears. She begins talking about the Major, through whom she says, by way of segué, she "first found a connection with the Blackwood firm:"

> It was through the Major that I sent with trembling in the spring of 1852 my little story called 'Katie Stewart' for the consideration of the Editors--hoping, . . . yet scarcely expecting[,] to be admitted to the honours of the Magazine at the first flight (though I was already at twenty-four the author, in youthful presumption, of three or four novels). I had, indeed, I believe, attempted that flight before in the case of 'Margaret Maitland,' . . . respecting which I wrote a letter full of the sickness of hope deferred, which had so touched the heart of Mr John Blackwood, who took it for the pathetic effusion of an old, sad, and disappointed writer, that he had nearly accepted my lucubrations out of pity, never suspecting that the pathos of that appeal came from a girl of twenty, who did not then know what disappointment meant. . . . I received [the first proofs of 'Katie Stewart' marked "for the Magazine"] on the morning of my wedding-day--not exactly a moment when the glory and excitement of such a second event could have the appreciation which was its due. (*APH* 2: 415-16)

Though Oliphant indicates clearly that she was already experienced in the self-productive negotiation of the literary market place, she effaces the experience and

the very embodiment of that prior-to-Blackwood self "with [the] trembling" 'I' who offers her commodifiable product for the public "honours of the Magazine at first flight" (2: 415). These are the same highly-mediated and -determining "'honours of print and pay'" which marked Eliot's merited transfiguration to literary substance (2: 435). Bourdieu says that such "thinly disguised expressions of a sort of dream of . . . flying" reflect a desperation "to defy the gravity of the . . . field" in which self-production is taking place (370). In Oliphant's case, however, as in Gore's, her body disappears into coverture.

In this passage, then, Oliphant effaces her experienced body and its proven capacity for self-commodification. She must do so in order to claim the market innocence we have seen was required of Gore by the Blackwoods. This female body, which will no longer need to represent itself within the market, is displaced simultaneously with its reattribution of innocence from unmediated self-production into the parallel domestic relation of marriage. She represents the establishment of the latter relation as the primary identifying "event" of the two. It takes place, as does the professional one, at the moment in which her inexperience implicitly justifies her ascent to the womanly identity she will claim throughout her life. That is, the "trembling" but heretofore unnamed body acquires a socially-valued personal identity at precisely the same instant that its sexual potential is contained by the relation that names her as newly claimed and represented. Within the narrative terms of *APH*, it is also the instant when her previous self-

expressions, which the editors mistook for "the effusions of an old, sad, and disappointed writer . . . full of the sickness of hope deferred"(2: 415), lose their false significations with respect to her 'true' identity. She is 'really' virginal (trembling newlywed) and young. She is, thus, proclaimed the new Mrs Oliphant as she takes up her domestic place, an assumption which suggestively authenticates the realistic healthiness of her identifying hopes. The domestic event tacitly and expressly overshadows the professional. Such a culmination of her literary arrival at name-status enacts the same priority she was to claim all her life as both the means and ends of her publicly self-productive labours. In this reminiscence, she identifies herself, first and foremost, as the womanly Mrs. Oliphant, wife and (future) mother, and only secondarily as the literary figure who claims to be at the time of her writing "the oldest contributor to the Magazine living." (2: 415)

In the next of her autobiographical fragments, Oliphant represents herself, not as a neophyte producer of literature, but as a retroactive determinant of cultural icons: "We cannot resist the temptation of quoting one brief note, which had it been revealed to the ladies of the genial fifties, who had all in their youth adored Bulwer, would have been felt by them, we cannot but feel the most unkindest [sic] cut of all" (*APH* 2: 429). Upon mention of Bulwer's name, Oliphant footnotes her own eager consumption of that author's work:

> I cannot refrain from a personal recollection here. I was a very small

> child, . . . but already a confirmed novel-reader, devouring everything that came in the way, . . . when 'Ernest Maltravers' ended, . . . for [the] sequel [of which] I persecuted the proprietor of the nearest accessible circulating library . . . The old lady . . .discoursed to me most seriously on the subject [of the shocking novel], ending the lecture by bringing forth 'Fatherless Fanny,' an improving work of the period. All being fish that came to my net, I devoured 'Fatherless Fanny' without being the less eager for the other works. (2: 429)

Within this memory, her indiscriminate literary consumption requires the sort of corrective illumination she can offer only now from her informed position of literary intimate and trusted archivist. This correction extends to the group of naive female readers implicitly likened to her recalled child-self with their unquestioning support of Lytton's cultural and literary self-production as a writer who was romantically empathetic to the concerns and interests of his feminine fans. The letter betraying reality reads,

> "Pray let me express a hope that the Music Hall will not be overcrowded with ladies--they always throw a chill upon every audience. Accustomed to talk, it bores them to listen; and their unaccustomed and frigid silence stifles every attempt at a cheer which the labouring orator vainly endeavours to provoke. If those fair refrigerators are to be multitudinous, I hope they will be ranged together and not interspersed throughout so as to leave the whole assembly despoiled of any spark of electricity by non-conductors of silk or muslin." (*APH* 2: 429-30)

In a gesture of power available only through "the disciplinary authority of the [professional] reviewer" (Ferris 33), Oliphant reveals his disloyal condescension and contempt for the dedicated but naive readership which comprised Lytton's "'Enviable Popularity'" (the page's heading) and which enabled him to "realise . .

. to the full, the material advantages of his work" (*APH* 2: 424-25). In case this overt display of her insider knowledge makes her complicitous in the author's deception, Oliphant has already asserted her own belonging with the deceived group of consumers.

The language with which she introduced her footnoted identification with the mass of his female readers--"I cannot refrain from a personal recollection" (*APH* 2: 429)--suggests an irresistible imperative for an act of distancing that works in two directions simultaneously. First, it marginalises her as a young consumer along with the rest of Lytton's 'lay' readers and precludes the possibility that she withheld knowledge that would have profoundly undercut his "confiden[ce] in fortune" (2: 425). Second, it distances her failure in discrimination from the professional identity she now assumes to reveal his market-based duplicity. Such gossipy iconoclasm not only reinforces the truth-value of her version of literary history, but also feminises its intimate project of professional (self- and other-)revelation. She at one recalls, produces, and reflects the anecdote's heading--"'The Chilliness of a Female Audience'"--in her specifically-sexed enactment of her role as chronicler and mediator of the 'truth.' She is not producing this 'truth' about Lytton, only relaying her discovery of his self-expression's false signification as well as her own discovered likeness and alliance with his alienated audience. In effect, his reality comes to significance across Oliphant's own movement from indiscriminate and naive consumer to

highly discriminating and informed producer.

Throughout volume two's last two chapters, entitled 'The New Blackwood Band' and 'Major Blackwood,' the narrating 'I' that has offered an often self-conscious interpretation of archival data now becomes predominantly the personal 'I' of her recalled participation in the firm's operations or the peripherated witness of the effect of those operations as they circulate within the public domain. For this reason, the history itself becomes very contextualised according to her own appearances within and responses to its progress. One example of the latter is the preceding anecdote, but others are typically represented by her reaction to "the too speedy termination" of Eliot's *Adam Bede* in 'Maga': "a disappointment which the present writer remembers to have felt most keenly, and almost as a personal injury" (*APH* 2: 437). By the time Eliot wrote this novel, Oliphant was a regular contributor to *BM*, but she adopts the position in this recollection of the passive consumer. Her unknowing reading body seems surprised (or ambushed) by Eliot into a declaration of its materiality in the senses of complaint of "personal injury" and her implicit acknowledgement of paying consumerism. "[T]he present writer remembers to have felt" this materialised past "most keenly," but occupies only a disembodied literary present as she reproduces it for public apprehension. She is, in effect, leaving this body behind, fully occupied by its vulnerability to and passive reception of literary self-production.

This sort of disavowal continues even when she finally begins to speak

directly of her own "considerable share in bringing grist to the mills of 'Maga'" (*APH* 2: 454) in the final chapter of volume two, the subject of which is Major Blackwood's reign as co-sovereign to the firm. She opens the chapter with a clear declaration of his reign's superior market potential as it is represented by the human resources at his literal and literary command:

> There had never perhaps been a time when a band of contributors more active and productive surrounded the Editor of the Magazine. . . . Fiction was exceptionally strong in . . . Bulwer and the new sensation of 'The Scenes of Clerical Life' . . . [A]ll the adventurous kind of the brothers of the pen . . . thronged about that lively centre of literary life. Three brothers Hamley and . . . Chesney, all soldiers, flowed into the ranks. Mr White, the author of 'Sir Frizzle Pumpkin,' half soldier, half clergyman, . . . Mr Lucas Collins, another clergyman of a different order, one of the most accomplished and scholarly of the contributors of 'Maga,' lent a strong and steadfast support. It would be false modesty not to allow that I had myself in these days a fluctuating but considerable share in bringing grist to the mills of 'Maga.' . . . The new men . . . lived with [John Blackwood] like brothers, . . . keeping up from all corners of the earth a frequent correspondence, always with an eye open for "what would do for the Magazine," and throwing themselves with the warmest personal interest into everything that concerned its success and fame. (2: 453-55)

"[F]alse modesty," sh says, would consist of her total disallowance of her own presence at this time, when the original editor's simultaneously cultural and capitalist objectives are represented as being achieved (*APH* 2:454): "'My character and interest are at stake . . . [N]othing will appear in the Magazine but what it will be both for my credit and interest to publish'" (1: 338-39). Apparently, however, 'true modesty' does not allow her to name herself as one of

the "'credit[able]'" contributors,'" but only to indicate her supply of "grist" to the firm's economic "'interest.'" Unlike those of the other authors, her stated relation to production is "analogous to those prevailing in a textile mill" in the sense that her value is specifically and solely labour-value (Feltes *Modes* 63). Implicitly, she is also excluded from the "brothers of the pen [who] thronged about [the] lively centre of literary life" and who "lived . . . like brothers" with the Major's own real sibling at the heart of the periodical industry (*APH* 2: 454). Her name, unlike "[t]he old names [which] had almost entirely disappeared," never appears by means of her own pen. She will only represent herself here to avoid falseness, and only as "fluctuating but considerable" instances of alienated labour supplying "grist to the mill of 'Maga'" and to the editors' self-realising commodification her literary production.

In contrast to Oliphant's specifying representation of the male contributors, she "allows" only a vague gesture toward herself. She is merely a dependent of indeterminate value with only an uncertain "share" of supply. However, while the language and placement of her self-reference clearly indicate her cultural marginalisation as a female literary labourer who is merely appended to a unified professional brotherhood, it also represents her production of herself in the capitalist mode as the economic underpinning of the firm's cultural self-realisation.

Oliphant suggests the moment of her emergence as a contributor as the

realisation of Blackwood's utopian capitalist dream. She calls it the most "active and productive" time of the House's history, throughout which the demands of the market are well apprehended and more than adequately met: "in steadfast support and varied and unfailing supply the Magazine had never been more strong" (*APH* 2: 454). While she admits that there has been some loss in the area of "personal relations" in the firm's escalation to a factory style of literary production, "they were still more individual than those of any other periodical" (2: 454). Within this passage, however, this potential for individuality is realised only by the males she names. Eliot remains undistinguished from her highly-lucrative literary "sensation of 'The Scenes of Clerical Life'"(2: 454) and Oliphant herself is only a "considerable" capacity for unspecified commodity production. The language with which she represents herself in her guise as literary "grist" supplier makes her uniquely integral to and even indistinguishable from the capitalist operations of the cultural "mill" she says *BM* had become "in th[o]se days." In effect, she not only disappears into the capitalist background against which the individualities of the brotherhood are named to the centre, but she also constitutes that background's self-productive potential for the foregrounded men.

Oliphant's narrative realisation of the highly-masculine identities of the named contributors suggests and fulfills the capitalist promise made by William Blackwood many years before. That is, she enacts the identificatory benefit of making the "warmest" service of one's "personal interest[s]" simultaneous with

and identical to promoting "everything that concerned [the magazine's] fame and success" (*APH* 2: 455). Within *APH*, however, this promise of valued individualisation emerges as ideologically acceptable only in the realisation of professional male identity. To name herself is not 'true modesty.' Thus, Oliphant renders here the subordinated and erased service to men's identifying needs that she says in "The Grievances of Women" is woman's 'natural' and alienated share of authenticating domestic production. At a professional level, she now adds, this other-productive service "is somewhat humiliating:" "above all, contributors to periodical literature . . . giv[e] up their identity to that of the organ to which they were content to sacrifice their share of contemporary fame" (2: 173-74). They "remain, even to their successors, veiled figures moving in a mist" (2: 174). Oliphant claims that this alienation from individual and cultural (if not entirely from economic) credit is so, despite the author's "strong current of [market] power" as "proved [by the ability] to carry the public . . . for many years" (2: 173). Although this last reference is neither to women, nor, directly, to herself, the language of her final autobiographical fragment suggests that it is specifically applicable to both.

Before discussing that last reminiscence, however, I will turn first to the sustained recollection of her husband, their life, and his death that precedes it. In this anecdote she shows not only her own alienated rise to a highly-feminised importance in the firm, but her parallel and complicit subordination of her

professional identity within her marriage to her husband's identifying needs as an artist and a man.

To present the tale of Oliphant's "little tragedy" of marital bereavement, which she says is "no uncommon one, but not the less sad nor true," she uses a circuitous and passive strategy to create an appropriate space within the firm's history (*APH* 2: 472). She precedes it with a claim of self-discovery in the 1856 correspondence of John and Major Blackwood. She says, "[a]mong others I find various reports of myself,' which "are comically pathetic so long after date, when I have almost ceased to recognise the young person, usually called Katie between the brothers, as having anything to do with myself" (2: 470). She goes on,

> I had begun by that time, it appears, to write reviews and general articles of all kinds, which were approved to a considerable extent and in such terms as [those in] the following [note from John Blackwood to his brother]: "If you are sure of Hamley, Oliphant, and Katie for this month, we shall have a first rate number" & c. Oliphant, I need scarcely say, was Laurence Oliphant. . . . The Major, however, was more respectful when he reports having had a long chat with Mrs Oliphant in February 1856. This was the bright time of my early life, soon to disappear in clouds of trouble and sorrow. (2: 470)

Her self-presentation here seems reluctantly undertaken. Her demeanour suggests that for the sake of thorough reportage she cannot fail to include views of herself from the editors' perspective. As in her previous remembrance, such a gesture toward a disavowed past self avoids charges of false modesty at the same time that it credits her with the selflessness of true modesty.

She suggests in the preceeding passage that this lack of "recognis[able]" self is at least partly because the editors renamed her 'Katie' after her first fiction publication with them, *Katie Stewart*. As I mentioned earlier, she received news of this literary milestone on the same day that she assumed the identifyingly respectable title of Mrs Oliphant. Despite her social and civil acquisition of identity, however, the Blackwoods refuse to let the surname refer to her as one of their contributors, at least in conversation among themselves, for many years. Instead, they use the name to specify Laurence Oliphant, the well-known adventurer, religious cultist, and sporadically long-term foreign correspondent to the magazine.

The editors' appropriation of Oliphant's name suggests at once their power over the valuing specification of professional identity and their determination of male priority in terms of both individuality and dignity. That is to say, Laurence's claim to 'Oliphant' as the individualising sign of his literary identity takes precedence over Margaret's. Some portion of the blame for this may be attributed with high probability to the fact that Laurence often published under his own name while Margaret circulated her work either anonymously or under the credit of previous publications. However, Oliphant's comment about the Major's "more respectful" reference to her by her 'proper' name implies that Laurence's superior claim also had to do with the divergent degrees of professional esteem and value with which the editors credited the identities of each. In other words, the

Blackwood brothers exclusive appropriation of the name to Laurence specifies him as the 'real' Oliphant whose literary successes authenticate not only the man of letters himself as a successful contender for command of the market, but also the House of Blackwood as a determinant of such valued authenticity. In contrast, Margaret suffers what she has called "the somewhat humiliating" sacrifice of her identity (*APH* 2: 173) to the fictional productions which she acknowledges in an unpublished letter of 1882 as a periodical's "means [of] mak[ing itself] more popular" (MS 4437). Within the terms of her memory, then, the successful woman writer is stripped of 'real' identity by the employers whose economic interests she is recruited to realise. She is, in fact, a fiction (despite the "'first rate'" reality of her market value) and a "comically pathetic" one at that (*APH* 2: 470). This is so even to the Oliphant who now claims the name as a sign of her own authenticated literary being and who looks back through a "cloud of trouble and sorrow" upon her "past lives . . . with very little sense of its being us, in our own persons, who traversed (how could we do it?) those darkling paths through the valley of the shadow . . . which make up to many the sum of life" (*APH* 2: 472-73).

Just as she did in the formerly cited passage about her "considerable share in bringing grist to the mills of 'Maga'" (*APH* 2: 454), Oliphant uses the quantitative term here to suggest her abundant presence and material support of the editors' capitalist reproduction of culture. In a further repetition, just as the evocation of her literary plenitude in the former passage immediately preceeds her

disappearance into a male-productive background, so does it here. Now, however, she expands the professional backdrop into which she recedes to show that an identical self-effacement is required of her in order to serve the identificatory needs of her husband. The segué Oliphant uses into her "little [personal] tragedy" is the Major's "respectful" accreditation with her identity in a note to his brother about the couple's "'nice situation[:] She was working away at [an article about] Sidney Smith. . . . We went afterwards to her husband's [stained glass] studio. He . . . seemed in good spirits, and [is] getting on very well'" (2: 470). Oliphant takes over the narrative at this point: "I may be allowed to explain that my husband . . . had gradually been absorbed into [the Painted Glass] branch of art, which had the advantage of paying at once, though with many regrets, always hoping to resume the exercise [and study] of a higher" (2: 471). As "an artist[, however], and not a man of business, the endeavour did not prove very successful in a pecuniary point of view, and accelerated the progress of the [fatal] illness which had already begun to lay its grasp upon him." Although she claims she has been forced by the narrative's need for clarification to the "momentary aberration" of revelations "too personal" for a professional chronicle (2: 472), she is also "glad to have the opportunity," she says, to correct Mr. W. B. Scott's

> represent[ation] of my husband as abandoning his work in consequence of my own sudden (and undeserved) success in literature--an imputation so bitterly untrue that Francis Oliphant died of his work after a few years too strenuous exertions, leaving his wife, more robust but less fortunate, to struggle through more than

half a lifetime, through many sorrows, alone. (2: 471-72)

Within the structure of this reminiscence, Oliphant moves from being the subject to the productive witness of the history she relates. Her husband, now, is the only specified Oliphant and she is merely one of the conditions by which that identity originally acquired meaning and lost value. She works to re-ascribe his individual and very middle-classed value, here, with her corrective effacement of her own contributions to the family fortunes. This is the 'truth' of both Oliphants. Though Frank was an artist, he did not (could not "his wife" suggests) lapse into the aristocratic parasitism of which he has been accused. Instead, he devoted himself to the identifying industry of the middle-class craftsman. She presents his inadequacy not as a failure of his individual nature but as the artist's "natural" incomprehension of the "technicalities of a balance sheet" and unsuitability for the productive demands of the capitalist system (*APH* 2: 472, 471). In ideological effect, his lack of success "in a pecuniary point of view . . . notwithstanding a number of commissions and plenty to do" is a confirmation of the authentic artistic identity she strives to establish for him (2: 471).

While the middle class man he 'really' was emerges with a valuing specificity, the woman she was becomes less and less personally distinct. Immediately following her reference to "my own sudden . . . success in literature," she becomes only "his wife," and shortly afterward "his widow" (*APH* 2: 471-72). Retreating from the singularity suggested by literary eminence, Oliphant takes

identifyingly effacing refuge in the 'every woman' plight of bereavement. So absorbing was this transformation that she can no longer recall with certainty its preceeding literary identity. She has had to rely on the information 'discovered' within the Blackwood archive: "I had begun by that time, it appears . . ." (2: 470). As is the case with her representation of her literary career generally, then, she sidesteps the potential "aberration" of self-fullness with an authenticating dedication of her identifying labour to the self-effacing reproduction of another's priorised being.

The final reminiscence picks up where this one ended, but does so some thirteen pages later:

> I am tempted to join on another scrap of personal history to that of my old friend [the Major] before I end this portion of the family history. I had myself gone through many vicissitudes of life when I found myself in the winter of '60 [the year following Frank's death] in Edinburgh, whither I had come temporarily with my little family of three fatherless children. I was poor, having only my own exertions to depend on, though always possessing an absolute-foolish courage (so long as the children were well, my only formula) in life and providence. But I had not been doing well for some time. . . . My contributions sent from Italy, where I had passed a year watching my husband's waning life, had been, as I can see through the revelations of the Blackwood letters, pushed about from pillar to post, these kind-hearted men not willing to reject what they knew to be so important to me, yet caring little for them, using them when there happened to be a scarcity of material; and after my return things were little better. Several of my articles were rejected, and affairs began to look very dark for me. Why I should have formed the idea that in these circumstances, when there was every appearance that my literary gift, such as it was, was failing me, they would be likely to entertain a proposal from me for a serial story, I can scarcely now tell; but I was rash and in need. (*APH* 2: 485-86)

At long last, here she is, apparently in her own person. We must remember, of course, that she grants this clarity to a figure of herself whose "travers[al of] . . . those darkling paths through the valley of the shadow" obscured her distinct self-perception in the previous anecdote (*APH* 2: 472-73). This disavowal produces a sense of self-consciously distanced narrativity, here, as if she were only telling a story about someone she recalls, despite her claim that it is the tale of "the greatest triumph, at least in a pecuniary point of view, of my life, . . . the beginning of [the] series of stories called the 'Chronicles of Carlingford'" (2: 487). That this previously made gesture wards against an anxiety about her present overt and substantial self-representation is evident in her diminution of the nearly four page recollection to "another scrap of personal history" divided into only two paragraphs. Here, however, she offers neither apology nor explanation for her eleventh-hour domination of the final five pages of "the [Blackwoods'] family history" (2: 485). Presumably she feels sure of the appropriateness of what she represents as the tale of only a modest "triumph"--"These books, I fear, are no longer very well remembered by any one" (2: 487)--but its narrative style differs radically from that employed to report the careers of the others of Blackwoods' most important contributors. This "scrap" is a beautifully crafted short story bearing all the marks of domestic fiction's conventions of realism: the meticulous detailing of circumstances, the significance-laden sketching of character, and the qualitative revelation of the protagonist's subjective state. She even provides us

with a very precise and highly evocative setting for the literary action we feel justifiably certain is about to unfold:

> At the time I was living in Fettes Row, in a little house consisting of the ground-floor and the basement below, a rather forlorn locality, but commanding a wide prospect. . . . I walked up to [the Blackwoods' offices on] George Street, up the steep hill, with my heart beating, not knowing (though I might very well have divined) what they would say to me [about the proposed story]. There was, indeed, only one thing they could say. They shook their heads: they were very kind, very unwilling to hurt the feelings of the poor young woman, with the heavy widow's veil hanging about her like a cloud. No; they did not think it was possible. I remember very well how they stood against the light, the Major tall and straight, John Blackwood with his shoulders hunched up in his more careless bearing, embarrassed and troubled by what they saw and no doubt guessed in my face, while on my part every faculty was absorbed in the desperate pride of a woman not to let them see me cry. . . . I remember the walk down the hill, and a horrible organ that played 'Charlie is my darling,' and how one line of the song came into my mind, "The wind was at his back." The wind, alas! was not at my back, I reflected, but strong in my face, both really and metaphorically, the keen north-east that hurries up these slopes as if it would blow every fragile thing away.
>
> I went home to find my little ones all gay and sweet, and was occupied by them for the rest of the day in a sort of cheerful despair --distraught, yet as able to play as ever (which they say is part of woman's natural duplicity and dissimulation). But when they had all gone to bed, and the house was quiet, I sat down--and I don't know when, or if at all, I went to bed; but next day (I think) I had finished and sent up to the dread tribunal in George Street a short story . . . which set me up at once and established my footing in the world.
>
> (2: 486-87)

Despite the sense of having 'really' encountered Oliphant in her professional threshold tale, a brief glance back will confirm her substantive absence. As she said was the case in her last "scrap" of self-perception, we

achieve "little sense . . . [of her] own person" (2: 472). Instead, she is only a mobile and highly feminised subjectivity whose interpretive passage through the landscape transforms physical realities into metaphoric signifiers. According to Bourdieu's work, her perceptions become "objectifications of the social relationship in which they are produced and function" as indices of placement (227). She trudges, all rash and needy heart, out of the bleak valley of poverty and "dark . . . affairs" (whose "wide prospect [consisted], it is true, of houses and waste land, but also of a great deal of sky and air" [*APH* 2: 486]). She labours towards hope in the office on George Street where the powerful brothers, who are implicitly unwilling to risk their self-productive "organ" (*APH* 2: 174), stand in stark relief "against the light," obstructing her access to it. She then struggles homeward with the wind, invoked by the "horrible organ[,] . . . strong in [her] face." We never glimpse this face, it is turned towards the brothers. Once home, she represents herself as a self-produced fiction of idealised maternity, which she implies is a metaphor for every woman's inevitably alienated expression of her nature as it produces the domestic requirements of the children. And then, she says, "I sat down--and I don't know when, or if at all, I went to bed; but next day (I think) I had finished."

In her nearly identical *A&L* account of this self-productive moment, she likens it to a professional rapture: "I sat up nearly all night in a passion of composition, stirred to the very bottom of my mind" (70). Here the moment is, in

Bourdieu's words, "pleasure purified of pleasure," so that it can become instead "a symbol of excellence" (6), of her fitness for cultural reproduction. Her present understatement and seeming uncertainty about the creative epiphany--"I don't know when, or if . . ." and "I think . . ."--in contrast to the minutiae's exactitude--"I remember . . . a horrible organ that played 'Charlie is my darling"--underscores both the personal absence she rewrites as metaphoric feminine representivity and the distance from self-full representation she attempts to maintain. Even in the face of her tacit admission that the secure "footing in the [professional] world" established in 1860 was to last for the thirty-seven years between *The Chronicles*' publication and *APH*'s, the language of her representation invokes the alienation and obsolescence she said would inevitably obscure "above all, contributors to periodical literature" from specific identification and make them, "even to their successors, veiled figures moving in a mist" (*APH* 2: 173, 174). Since her only concrete self-description is of "the poor young woman, with the heavy widow's veil hanging about her like a cloud," she seems to be suggesting that at this epiphany of professional passage (into the "wide prospect" promised by her realisation of the domestic ideal under difficult circumstances) she is 'always already' alienated from the literary production of herself. Oliphant becomes, to the autobiographical 'I' who is this "young woman['s]" successor, a dimly perceptible professional figure of inevitable obsolescence, a domestic fiction of nonetheless (and even consequently) womanhood. Then she vanishes altogether,

to use her own words, "both really and metaphorically." Her fragment ends; the volume closes; she dies. Taken as a whole, her intermittent representation of herself throughout *APH* comprises a fairly comprehensive picture of her personal rather than professional experiences. Taken 'scrap' by 'scrap,' however, her production of herself in quotidian detail has been subsumed time after time into her employers' professional project: her reproduction of their own and others' public identities.

Her vagueness about the particulars of her own professional practice makes it difficult to discuss with any certainty. It is also in sharp contrast with the specificity of her domestic self-representation. Like Blackmore, I have to wonder at the absence of "'book . . . talk'" within such an apparently appropriate context (*APH* 2: 21). But then I recall how that very lack domesticated both the professionals and their encounter itself. Even further, I would argue that her refusal of the professional is her ultimate avoidance of the "aberration" she referred to earlier as "too personal"self-disclosure (2: 472). In this light the unspeakable details emerge as the highly intimate production of a professional female self, while the domestic fiction of idealised womanhood becomes the acceptably circulated 'mistification' of that labouring figure. Since she knowingly commodifies the 'homey' story of self-production as she presents it in *APH*--a story which she has suggested she not only lived, but 'really' is--her withholding of the details of her professional labours prevents the female body that executed

them from being subjected to a simultaneous and apprehensible commodification. Because she has constructed herself as a real(istic) character of her self-productive domestic fiction, this is the only 'veiled figure' she offers for consumption. Details about this safely distanced woman are necessary to the task of comprehensive representation.

This idea is supported by a passage in which she self-consciously debates the appropriate inclusion of revelations about the Major's relationship with his children. She decides to add them, she says, because such domestic minutiae is acceptable "by right of nature" (*APH* 2: 373). The nature to which she refers emerges here as both that of the document itself, as she determines it is to be construed, and that of the author whose personal anecdotes contextualise the second volume's progress through the Blackwoods' history. The fragmentation of her experiences is another aspect of her domesticating intentions. This becomes clear when she says,

> These very discursive but also very living and real notes . . . all pass before us like a panorama . . . where movement adds to the charms of the picture. It is indeed real life with all its trivialities, the great and the small mingled together, and in the record of every day a joke . . . taking up as much space as the best advices or most penetrating remarks. I had thought of classifying these anecdotes to make them less fragmentary; but by doing so something of the artless strain of life, the succession without perspective, always graphic, always sincere, without bias or effort, would be lost. (2: 357-58)

Though her reference in this passage is to the contents of the brothers' correspondence, her comments about 'strategic artlessness' also apply to her

structural management of her own disembodied appearances in the text. She is literally "the small," the no-body, who is "mingled together" as contrasting relief "with the great" beings of literary substance. Hers is "the record of every day," whose very "fragment[ation]" makes "indeed real" (or, "indeed real[ises]") the identities of those who pass through it "without [any] perspective but hers. She is the representative "contributor to periodical literature" who willingly "sacrifices [her] share of contemporary fame" in her self-effaced service to the masculine "organ" of Blackwood's self-production (*APH* 2: 173-74). I would argue that with this language Oliphant obliquely claims the industry's very mode of production itself as being ideologically suitable, "by right of [the] nature" of its requirements for 'periodical' labour and selfless 'submission,' to women's authenticating expression of herself (2: 373). In view of this, Oliphant is the epitome of both the professional ideal and of middle-class womanhood. As such her quotidian touchstone of reality transforms this second volume representation of literary history and its participants into the inherently alienable domestic product of Oliphant's naturally self-expressive professional labours.

Notes

1. The text of this note is interesting for the conditions of its praise of Oliphant and for its suggestive association of her qualifications for writing with her willing self-reproduction as wholly subsumed:

> A few years ago, when I was talking with Mrs Oliphant over some new outlet for her ceaseless literary activity, the happy thought struck me of asking her to carry out my uncle [John]'s idea and to become the historian of the firm in whose service she was already an honoured veteran. For forty years she had worked incessantly for the 'Magazine,' intimate with its history, thoroughly imbued with all its traditions and very loyal to its past. Mrs Oliphant eagerly accepted the trust, entered into its fulfilment with even more than her wonted enthusiasm, and, with a pathetic prescience . . . regarded the work as a fitting completion of her long and strenuous literary life. To my great sorrow, this anticipation has proved only too true, and two volumes of 'William Blackwood and his Sons,' which was all that their faithful and accomplished ally had overtaken, are now submitted to the public surrounded by the melancholy interest attaching to a posthumous work. (1: viii-ix)

2. Despite the lack of sustained self-discussion, her direct self-reference cumulatively occupies some twenty to twenty-five pages of the second volume. This is as much space as she allots to any of *BM*'s most important contributors in the post-mythic age. It is more space than that dedicated to any other woman in the Blackwoods' employ. The sheer accumulated volume of her self-reference suggests her sense of her own large place in the firm's history, while its fragmentation suggests her unwillingness to convey that sense clearly.

3. It also allows Oliphant to acquire the status of a celebrity to whom fellow notables pay the homage of seeking a private audience.

Conclusion

Margaret Oliphant was one of the many professional writers who benefitted from the nineteenth century's expanding periodical market. Born at the inception of an era whose definitive event was a prolonged conversion to the tenets of mature capitalism, Oliphant capitalised on opportunities for self-professionalisation newly available to her and other women of her talents and class. Even for the educated men of this period, a publicly-derived identity occurred at the intersection of several ideologically conflicted imperatives: the 'disinterested' production of culture; the unsought achievement of authority; the 'interest-laden' operations of a capitalist market place; the realisation of a marketable identity. These requirements exerted pressure upon both corporate and individual self-representations in such a way that a careful negotiation of ideological significations became necessary. The site of this public production of identity was the periodical market itself and its means were the value(s)-laden language and structures of the literature each journal published.

For women, this intersection of the market, literary, and identificatory interests was particularly perilous. The ideological link between professional woman and prostitute constantly threatened to become indicative of the fundamentally economic relation of the paid woman of letters to the literary market place in which her name circulated. Oliphant negotiated this link with as much care and (arguably) more success than most of her contemporaries. Her

strategies of self-legitimation and -authorisation--her convincing adoption of a male persona, her publicly-executed establishment of issues as belonging within woman's discursive jurisdiction, and her rhetorical domestication of professional writing--are evident throughout the selection of her works that I have examined here. Beginning with her *A&L*, moving through Chapter Two's sampling of nonfiction essays about 'the woman question', and lingering in the final three chapters on the first two volumes of her final major work, *APH*, I show her unceasing sensitivity to the potential association of her paid literary production of a living with always devaluable, but also, often apparently transgressive, womanhood.

In the *A&L*, Oliphant's representation of herself and her career indicates the high degree to which she perceived her labouring body to be both the source and stakes of this potentially transgressive identification. Such a perception, I argue, is made inevitable by the middle-class underpinnings of her convincing construction of writing as just another variety of domestic work, the effaced execution of which circulates within public apprehension as a marker of implicitly economic status. That is to say, the never-seen administrative and actual (including, here, literary) labour of the ideal(ised) Victorian matron produces a domestic setting whose perpetual order, plenitude, and comfort underwrite the family's (which is also to say its male head's) legitimated claims to at least middle-class standing. While it is always understood that the matron of the household is responsible for the

industrious production of this setting (to the extent that her 'respectability' depends on her obvious ministrations), the fact of her labour itself must never become visible. When apprehended by a public gaze, she must appear to be engaged in nothing more arduous or important than 'fancy' needlework or some other form of 'accomplished' and womanly activity. Although it may be argued that this effacement is necessary to prevent imputations against the male income-earner's status as an adequate provider, Oliphant's work looks to precisely this conceptual association of the visibly labouring female body with apprehensible indicators of economic and social substance to prove that unpaid domestic labour nonetheless produces material(able) value. Not surprisingly, then, within the terms of her contention, the working woman's body hovers perilously close to devaluation as just one more commodity source, however much the site and measure of its hire is also to be within a privately-negotiated labour market. Any link between the female body and the conscious production of money threatened to construct the woman as ambitious at best, and morally suspect at worst.

As I have shown, Oliphant's professional account of her life and career is dedicated to a maternalising discussion of her labour's accidentally and often haphazardly economic effects, while the actual labour that produced these effects is sequestered beyond the reading public's gaze. That is, Oliphant rarely lets her readers gain a concrete sense of an embodied writer at her professional work. She merely reports that she habitually worked at night when the children and guests

were asleep so that during their waking hours she could decorously assume her maternal/hostess duties without disruption or discomfort to them. Such a determined and careful effacement makes her production of an adequate subsistence doubly 'miraculous': first, no specifiable body ever appears to actually bend itself to a market-oriented task; and, second, Oliphant appears to be self-sacrificingly diligent in her execution of what was widely-regarded as her unceasing industry. Although she effaces the actual labour throughout the *A&L*, she refers often to the details of its commodified circulation in the literary market place. She had, after all, her maternal duty to uphold, an ideologically-approved necessity for her market presence.

I argue that her known status as a 'femme sole', thus justifies not only the necessity for her successful presence within the public domain, but also her bid for the authority to commodify her views: her middle-class respectability. That authority, in its turn, derives (at least in part) from the cultural substance which attached to her name (the professionalised sign of her personal identity) at the same juncture of private and public at which her body must be seen to be absent. As I have used the term throughout this work, cultural substance refers to the largely professional accreditation of a public figure's moral and or intellectual distinction. It has also been my contention that Oliphant's work reveals the manner in which the forms and manifestations of the distinctions available to Victorian authors depend upon their gender-specific representation of their

professionally-productive bodies. From my analysis of the *A&L*, it emerges that on the one hand, Oliphant's constant state of financial crisis was a convenient (if not deliberate) construction of a perpetual necessity for her labour and effective diversion for the fact of her actually-substantial earning power. On the other hand, however, it is precisely that constant need for her paid presence in the public domain of cultural production which made her vulnerable to charges of 'hackdom' because there was "so much of [her]" on the market at any given moment. Not only does Oliphant's observation speak to the cultural value ascribed to difficult access (and that either because of rarity or obscurity), but it also demonstrates her rhetorical substitution of her devaluable working-woman's body with her devalued body of 'woman's work'.

In Chapter Two, I have shown how she addresses this marginalisation of all things feminine with her nonfiction articles on the 'woman question'. These papers work out Oliphant's public self-positioning with respect to the debate about the limits of what is and is not woman's authorised domain, role, and function in the changing operations of Victorian society. This was a particularly perilous question for her to address because it threatened to make her interest in the material and social effects of the literary industry doubly overt. Not only could she be understood to be earning her living by writing about these issues, but also to be benefitting from any appreciation in the feminine values she supported. This doubled jeopardy makes these papers a most useful means of examining her

strategic self-representation as a 'fit'(which, as I have demonstrated, means safely conservative) female contender for the authority to participate professionally in the determination of how such important issues were to be decided and, even more consequentially, how they were to be defined and priorised. These articles are also salient to consider because they have underwritten the twentieth century's dismissal of Oliphant as a money-fond antifeminist, a contention that I mitigate (if not wholly refute) by examining her deployment of ideology to criticise the essentialised marginalisation of women's productive participation in society, culture, and the erased domestic labour market. In Chapter Two I have shown that throughout the articles, Oliphant consistently argues that the empowerments of authority fought for by Victorian feminists were already available to women as a function of their 'natural' dominion over the domesticated and material production of individual and familial identity. Her reservations are that the execution of this productive labour must not displace her essential (and therefore primary) functions, nor should it be with the domain of public apprehension. That is, women should not, unless they absolutely must, labour openly for individualisation as a capitalist competitor.

At the level of my position about Oliphant, my strategy in uncovering the implications of what she says and how she says it in these essays is to foreground the capitalist conditions of their circulation and their expected contribution to the production and maintenance of her professional identity and value. This identity, I

have argued, can never be considered without also taking into account its reproduction within the important, but tacit, presence of both her publishers/editors and her consuming public. The necessary limits of this unconsidered reality has allowed the disappointed idealism of contemporary critics which has successfully precluded Oliphant's inclusion in the fluid canon of 'valued' Victorian writers. At the level of my interest in the production of professional identity in the Victorian market place, this strategy is a clearing gesture in anticipation of Chapter Three's more widely-applicable contention that there is a direct and proportionate correlation to high material value and low cultural value with respect to a gendered literary/cultural hierarchy. Within this hierarchy, I maintain, authors and genres seem to settle naturally into an authenticating and enduring proximity to substantiated literary importance. Only two of this group of essays bear Oliphant's claims of ownership: "The Great Unrepresented" and "The Anti-marriage League." Besides the fact of changing editorial policies about anonymity, it is possible to see not only that the necessity for individualisation of her commodified production had become impossible to evade, but also that Oliphant's lifelong bid for a place at the capitalist centre of culture had been rewarded with the tacit acknowledgement that the publicised sign of her identity was also an indicator of both her cultural substance and her market value.

Chapter Three begins my argument that this negotiation of the dividing line

between economic and cultural importance was differentially experienced by (and, therefore able to be represented differently for) various positions in the literary industry's hierarchy, by divergently-valued producers of fiction and nonfiction commodities, and, finally, by men and women. I n this chapter I have demonstrated how Oliphant mythologises William Blackwood's professional and cultural self-making. Her history of this rise traces his 'inherently' merited evolution from modest but comfortable anonymity to substantial and influential distinction. Her project in *APH* is to identify Blackwood (and through him his dynastic firm) in such a way that his fundamentally entrepreneurial interest in literature becomes, first and foremost, a legitimated guardianship of culture. The first of her strategies is to translate his ambitious self-education through a rudimentary and painstaking market analysis of literary consumption patterns into his demonstrably intuitive comprehension of subsequently authenticated cultural objects. Not surprisingly, since she deploys notions of her own body in the same way, Oliphant locates the signs of Blackwood's 'fitness' for his self-realisation at the determining heart of culture upon his middle-class body, as those signs are transmitted through the magazine he founded. The self-production she reports took place at the moment of his corporate identity's distinguishing emergence into the periodical industry in *BM*'s first issue and its (arguably) most controversial feature, "The Chaldee MS."

Oliphant uses this document as evidence of the systemic receptivity of

capitalism to writers' necessary exchange of material for cultural potential across the threshold monitored by the publisher/editor. Because Blackwood, as the known 'sober man [of a literary] business,' was able to accept (and even transcend, to some extent) the market's burdening of his self-production with materiality, his stable of writers (John Lockhart, John Wilson, and James Hogg) could be seen to be submitting themselves to the pursuit of his economically-validated identity. In the MS, this instrumentalisation is mythologised as the writers assume the shapes of beasts who answer Blackwood's call to capitalist battle for dominance within the periodical (and therefore cultural) market place. According to Oliphant's discussion of the MS and its effects upon its producers' careers, Blackwood's ownership of the means of production necessarily alienates his writers with the twofold effect of at once creating a power/dependency correlation between the positions of publisher-editor and author, and of preventing (to varying degrees, as I argue in Chapter Four) the writers' implication in the material interests of the market. Oliphant's selective citation of the MS indicates that this relationship is the means by which each of the positions within it confers a typically-configured identity and degree of executable agency upon its holder. Blackwood, as the MS's only fully-human representation of any integrity holds inherently rightful and encompassingly beneficial, and expressly determining dominion over the subordinated instruments of his will, though the specific distinctions and value of the 'self' each realises, I argue, is decided largely by the

nature (which is also to say the genre) of the writers' authenticated self-expression.

In Chapter Four, I begin my proof of this contention with an examination of Oliphant's representation of the careers of historian and political analyst Archibald Alison and popular novelist Samuel Warren. Although Alison's contributions to both the magazine and the firm's publishing list were neither on the same scale nor of the same market value as Warren's, he was the more highly-regarded of the two authors. From Oliphant's discussion, it is apparent that the high cultural value of Alison's widely-collected work more than compensated Blackwood for any material shortfall relative to Warren's hugely popular novels. Oliphant's portrayal of Alison in *APH* situates him in his cultural substance at the pinnacle of the hierarchy of Blackwood's literary subordinates. Further, she justifies his ascensions by carefully observing his self-expressive labours' 'natural' fit to the journal's production of the Blackwood name. In tacit comparison to Alison's seamless and beneficial intstrumentalisation, Warren is a perpetual outsider, his few nonfiction submissions having failed to declare his substantive resemblance to the cultural elite and his difference from competitors within the genre he undertook once the 'rage' for his novels diminished. Warren's distinctive value, instead, derived from the critical interest his moderately experimental fiction style attracted. Although the serialisation of these acclaimed and much-sought works occurred in *BM*, their superior material potential with respect to the firm's

subsistence seems inadequate to compensate for the nonfiction's shortfall in cultural significance. In keeping, then, with his 'lighter' literary product, Warren never achieves the kind of substantiated value enjoyed by Alison in the firm's history.

A feminine correlate to the sort of differentiated masculine representation of the two men, Gore and Eliot appear in differently-valued constructions of the possibilities for professional female identity. On the one hand, Gore, whose status as a "fashionable novelist of the day *par excellence*" (*APH* 2:235-36) indicates an abundant market presence and consequently precludes perceptions of her respectability, turns to the Blackwood firm for the professional coverture that will place her (nonetheless natural and implicitly embodied) production of her authentic self-expressions (her 'light' literature) in service to the journal's material interests. On the other hand, Eliot, whose suddenly-publicised, transgressive female body threatens to desubstantiate the cultural acclaim her relatively unalienated literary labours have accrued to her name, turns to the kind of privatising coverture that will contain her sexualised body within the domestic domain and mitigate its impingement upon her name's circulation in the market place. Because of Eliot's withdrawal into 'artistic' seclusion, she can once again be specified by the 'weighty' product of her labour rather than by her materialising body. All of this suggests, of course, that whereas Gore achieves professional viability by being subsumed into a typically middle-class agenda for masculine

identity-production, Eliot re-ascends to cultural eminence through Lewe's emphatic feminisation of her professional person and his mediation of her carefully-preserved and self-producing market practices. In other words, whereas Gore's practices come to emulate the domestic servitude of middle-class woman, Eliot's resemble those of the cultural elite, whose service to his own identifying interests is sanctified by that identity's association with beneficial cultural reproduction. Ultimately, I argue in Chapter Four, the difference between Gore's and Eliot's ascribed value to the firm and to culture is signified by the classing management of their feminine corporeity.

In Chapter Five I have discussed another indicator of an author's perceived status: the integrity and bulk of space Oliphant affords him/her in *APH*. I prepared for this argument in Chapter Four by noting that, unlike *BM*'s founding brotherhood (and its early adoptions), Archibald Alison, George Eliot, Samuel Warren, and a few others, Gore receives no sustained attention from Oliphant. Instead *APH*'s discussion of this highly feminised author is an accumulation of fragmented observations made either by the Blackwood of the day or by Warren which Oliphant deploys to illustrate or highlight some aspect of more central figures' literary activities. I contend that such an interrupted use of a small portion of available anecdotes about Gore structurally enacts the kind of ideological requirements for effaced and subordinated female self-production in a 'naturalised' professional setting that Oliphant herself experienced.

The most important difference between Oliphant's representation of herself and those which she develops for other authors is the absence of a specifically-professional discourse in her discussion of her career in *APH*. Instead of information about the writing or publishing of her own work, or a sustained focus on her own market practices, she offers literary events at which she is either a passive witness or a participating but secondary subject, whose domestically 'chatty' observations displace the essentially professional interests that constitute most of the anecdote's *raison d'etre* within the history. At the same time that this strategy produces a sense of Oliphant's decorous discretion and modest self-effacement, however, it suggests her familiarity with a wide range of the literary community's 'names'. Whether revealing her relation to the actual persons or to the work of the famous, Oliphant uses her account of herself as she does Gores': to provide a pervasive context within which her representation of others' professional identity acquires not only a personal dimension, but also the seeming reality of experiential immediacy. It all says that she was there; she saw; she met; she read. From the apparently light nature of her recollections, she could have been just anyone. But of course, she was not. She was the eminent and prolific woman of letters: Margaret Oliphant.

Throughout *APH*, Oliphant only discusses her professional labours in a focussed way twice: when she notes her 'considerable share' of contributions to *BM* and when she recalls the launch of her most popular fiction series, *The*

Chronicles of Carlingford. In Chapter Five, I show how she defuses the material gains implied by her prolific production of articles by representing herself as just another instance of labour in the Blackwoods' cultural mill, a 'general utility woman who is so alienated from the direct production of her own being that that labouring entity can never be distinguished from its literary product. Her body of work stands in for her working body in such a way that she seems to become, once again, merely the commodifiable background against which the male identities she helps to produce are 'named' into singular eminence. The reality, of course, is that she was very nearly as famous as some of those she served to produce. The only time she even acknowledges this stature as a professional writer is when she refers to the success that followed the publication of her Carlingford series. Her revelations about this public and market-based triumph take place in a sustained and highly personal narrative of her domestic/maternal need and its dramatic amelioration by the book's circulation, a gesture which emphasises the series' profoundly private inception, production, and effect. The narrative conventions which she invokes to tell this tale make it resemble the professional fiction work she was paid to execute for the journal. In effect she becomes a character in the story of her life and work, the never-specifiable figure of her own domesticated labour.

For Oliphant, ultimately, the story of her achievement of professional identity must be a domestic one. It was her most stably and beneficially signifying

way of negotiating the cultural and moral perils of market participation. As I have shown here, those anxieties may have been felt by all writers, but they were particularly acute for women whose regular submissions to the periodical press brought their labours visibly before the public since it threatened to materialise their relation to that domain. Exacerbating this precarious position was the perceived trajectory of the genre through which the author expressed her professional self. Fiction, and within that category especially the kind that possessed a less than best-selling mass appeal, admitted few to the cultural heights, however much it still permitted an author to live in comfort. Most often, the general readers and critics alike dismissed the producers of fiction to the margins of culture, to the market upon which they clearly depended and whose favours they evidently curried. As was the case with Oliphant, writers suffering such a consignment have acquired the label of 'hack' and have been enduringly percluded frm membership in the literary canon which many of them helped to define with their exclusion.

It has been my intention here to examine the both the terms of that exlusion and to argue for the importance of re-examining the work of once such outsider. My project then, had been to uncover the exigencies of Oliphant's creation and maintenance of a professional identity in such a way that the conflicting conditions of her self-production in a capitalist literary market can be seen to shape both her effacing demeanour towards her labour itself and towards its contribution to her

own interests. Furthermore, I have argued that Oliphant's awareness of the capitalist overdetermination of conformity and individualisation is evident in the very work which marginalised her as an artist. This is to say, of course, that to her at least, apparent conformity was the most irresistable imperative for her authorised market participation, but that she undertook it knowing its negative impingement upon her posterity. This cognizance is part of what has made her work so very interesting to read and so very worthy of reassessing as 'important Victorian literature'. As a woman making her largely unprecedented way within a traditionally-male profession, she merits sensitive critical attention; as a pioneer of capitalist literary production, she warrants our respectful acknowledgement of the market conditions which both constrained and potentiated her success; as a well-paid and enduringly-popular writer, she deserves the cultural recovery towards which my own labour has gestured.

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Appendix
Chronology of Margaret Oliphant

1828 (April 4): Margaret Oliphant Wilson is born at Wallyford, Scotland.

1838 (?): The Wilsons move to Liverpool.

1845: Mrs. Wilson becomes ill. At her bedside, Margaret writes her first novel, *Christian Melville* (published in 1856 under her brother Willie's name).

1849: *Passages in the Life of Mrs Margaret Maitland* is accepted for publication by Henry Colburn.

Margaret is sent to London for 3 months to both chaperone Willie and help control his accumulation of debt. During this trip, she meets her future husband, Frank Oliphant, a first cousin who lives in the same boardinghouse as the siblings.

1851: Dr. David Moir introduces Margaret to literary celebrities Major William Blackwood and John Wilson.

Colburn publishes *Caleb Field.*

(Oct.?): Frank Oliphant and Margaret are engaged.

1852 (May 4): The couple marry at St. Andrews Presbyterian Church in Birkenhead. On the same day, Margaret receives the proofs of *Katie Stewart, A True Story*, her first from *BM.*

Willie begins his lifelong dependency on Margaret's pension-like

tithe of her income for his support.

Margaret and Frank meet many rising and established artists: the Samuel Halls, Mary Howitt, and Dinah Mulock.

1853 (May 21): Margaret (Maggie) Wilson Oliphant is born, temporarily reconciling the child's maternal grandmother and father, who disliked each other to the point of mutual avoidance. Hostilities resumed within a year.

1854 (May 22): Marjorie, a second daughter is born the day before Mrs. Wilson collapses, suffering from a terminal illness.

(Sept. 17): Mrs. Wilson dies.

1855 (Feb. 8): Baby Marjorie dies.

(Nov.): An unnamed son dies the day of his birth.

1856: (April): *BM* accepts Margaret's essay 'The Laws Concerning Women' for publication.

(Nov. 16): Cyril (nicknamed Tiddy) is born healthy.

1857: Frank Oliphant learns about his advancing tuberculosis, but doesn't tell his family.

1858: No longer able to hide his illness, Frank reports the rest-trip recommendation of a specialist and the family begins to plan a trip to Italy.

(March): Steven Thomas is born.

(May 28): Steven dies from a defect of his heart.

(July 29): Francis Wilson (Margaret's father) dies.

1859: The Oliphants travel somewhat circuitously to Rome.

(April): Margaret discovers that she is pregnant.

(Oct. 20): Frank dies in Rome, leaving Margaret in debt and without funds.

(Dec. 12): Francis Romano (nicknamed Cecco) is born.

1860: (Feb): Upon their return from Italy, the Oliphants live with Margaret's oldest brother, Frank, and his family, but soon move to Edinburgh.

While doing research for *The Life of Edward Irving, Minister of the National Scotch Church* (Blackett, 1862), Margaret meets Thomas Carlyle, forming a lifelong friendship with his wife Jane.

1861 (March?): Margaret writes the first story in the *Chronicles of Carlingford* series: 'The Executor'.

(Sept. 1): *BM* begins publishing the next *Chronicles--The Rector* and *The Doctor's Family*--both of which prove popular.

1862 (Feb.): *Salem Chapel*, one of the *Chronicles* currently most studied, is serialised in 'Maga'.

1863 (June.): *The Perpetual Curate* appears in *BM.*

(Nov.): Margaret marshals a return to Rome, accompanied by two of her best friends and a combined total of 5 children.

1863 (Jan. 27): Maggie, the oldest Oliphant child, dies of gastric fever in Rome and is buried with her father.

(May): The group returns from Italy, but Margaret continues to travel, moving first to Paris and then to Switzerland for the summer.

1865 (Feb.): *Miss Marjoribanks* begins appearing in 'Maga'.

(Sept.): The family returns to London, taking up permanent residence in Windsor.

1866: Annie Walker (later Coghill, the editor of *The Autobiography and Letters*) joins the Oliphant household as an employed dependent. Two of her friends' (the Tullochs) children are long term, if intermittent guests throughout this period (of about 10 years, from 1863-73).

1868: Frank, Margaret's oldest brother, suffers a series of personal and professional disasters and requires his sister to assume both his debts and the care of 2 of his 4 children: Frank (who is educated with Margaret's own sons at Eton) and Nelly (a maternal aunt reluctantly takes Nelly in as a companion).

(March): Queen Victoria authorises a Civil List pension of Ł100/year for Margaret on the advice of Disraeli.

1870: Frank's wife dies and Margaret opens her home to the widower and the remaining 2 children, both of whom require educating:

Madge and Denny.

1871: Mrs Tulloch becomes seriously ill and Oliphant assumes primary care of the one remaining dependent, a daughter.

1875: Cyril begins attending Eton (acquiring the social and economic behaviours of his financially superior schoolmates).

(July): Frank dies, leaving nothing to Margaret but the continuing responsibility of his children and their futures.

(Oct.): Nephew Frank leaves England for a job in India. Cyril enters Balliol, but does not achieve well enough to find a job.

1879: Cecco (Francis) joins Cyril at Balliol, proving to be a more dedicated, if just as impractical, scholar.

(Oct. 29): Nephew Frank dies of typhoid in India.

1880 (May): 'The Grievances of Women', Margaret's first overtly 'feminist' essay, appears in *Fraser's Magazine*.

1884 (Jan.): Annie Walker marries and leaves the household.

Cyril, still unemployed, becomes seriously ill.

(May): Willie dies in Rome, releasing Margaret from the financial responsibility of his pension.

1890 (Nov. 8): Cyril dies of tuberculosis after a long series of recoveries and relapses.

1891: Margaret's health begins to deteriorate when she collapses,

complaining of intense abdominal pains.

1893 (July): Madge marries and leaves the household.

Cecco collapses and only partially recovers.

1894: *BM* commissions Margaret to write *William Blackwood and his Sons: The Annals of a Publishing House*.

(Oct. 1): Cecco dies.

1896 (June): 'Maga' publishes "The Anti-Marriage League" in response to Thomas Hardy's *Jude the Obscure*.

1897 (June): Margaret receives the diagnosis of terminal illness early in the month and dies on the 25th.

Blackwood's publishes the first 2 volumes of *The Annals*, assigning the final volume to Mary (Blackwood) Porter for publication in 1898.

1899: Coghill finishes editing Margaret's intermittent reminiscences and *The Autobiography and Letters* is published.